editor's choice

Vagabond

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 13

English Edition

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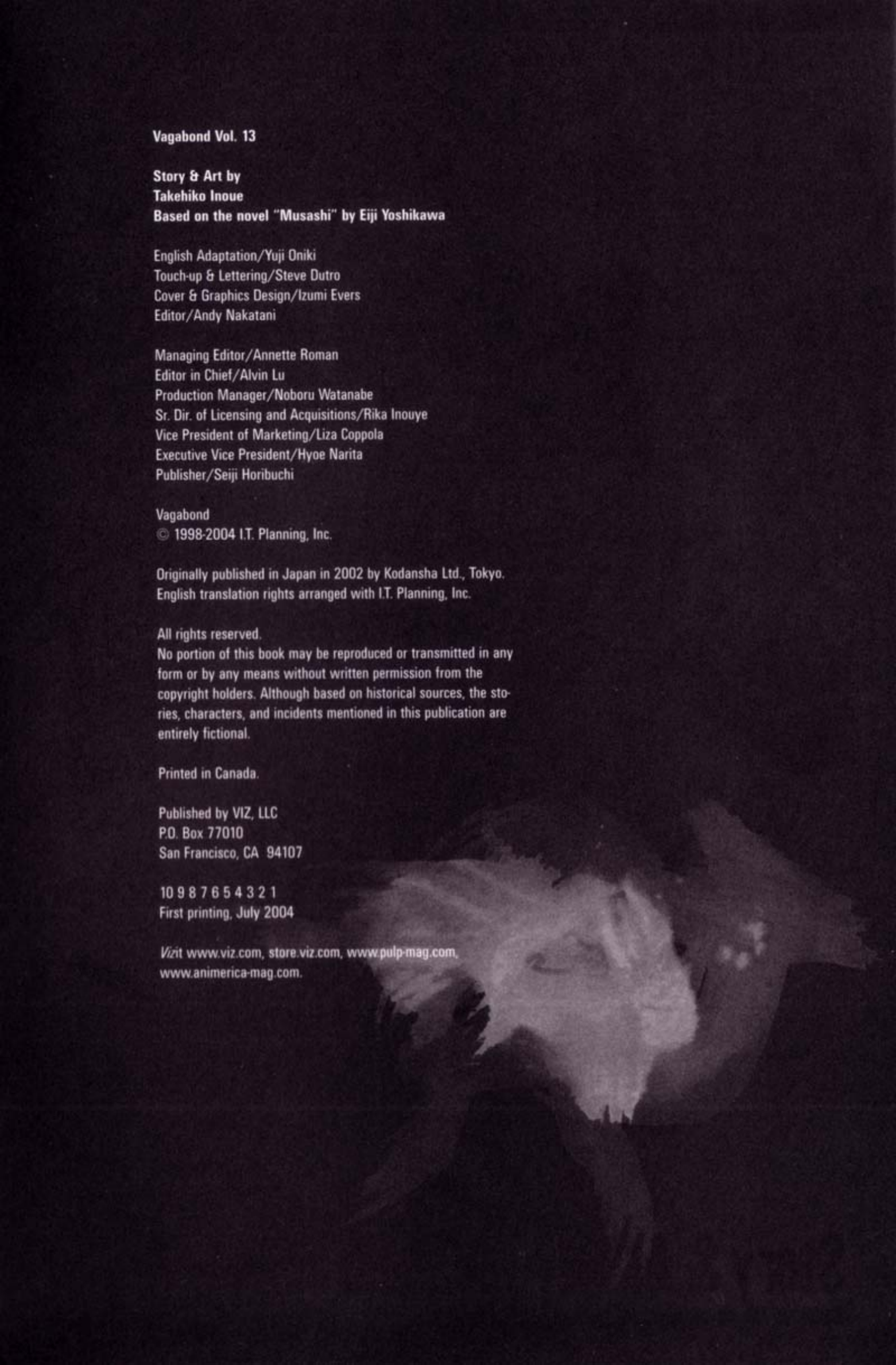

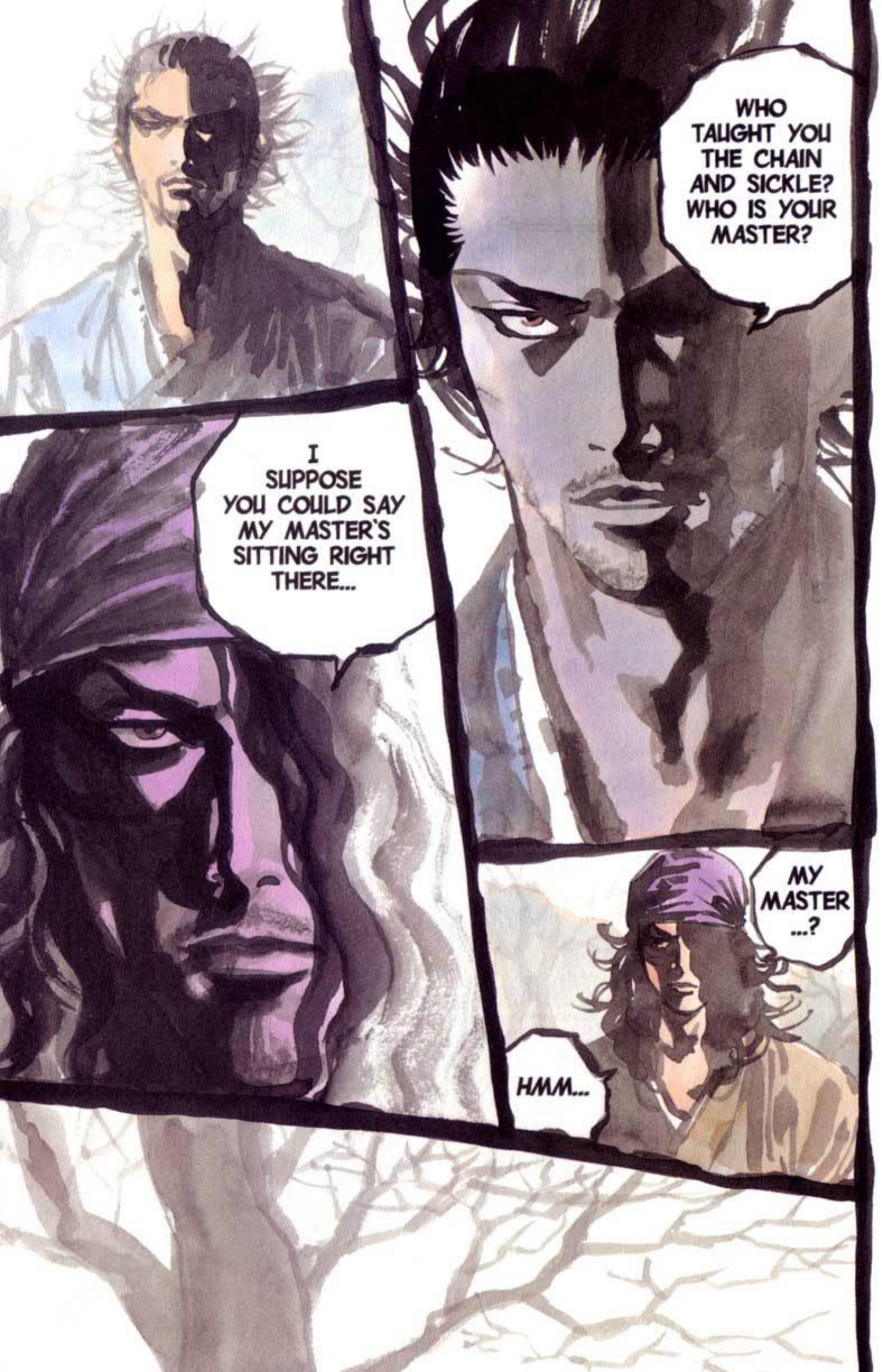
WHO TAUGHT YOU THE CHAIN AND SICKLE? WHO IS YOUR MASTER?
I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY MY MASTER'S SITTING RIGHT THERE...
MY MASTER ...?
HMM...

#118 Rindō

Vagabond

vol. 13

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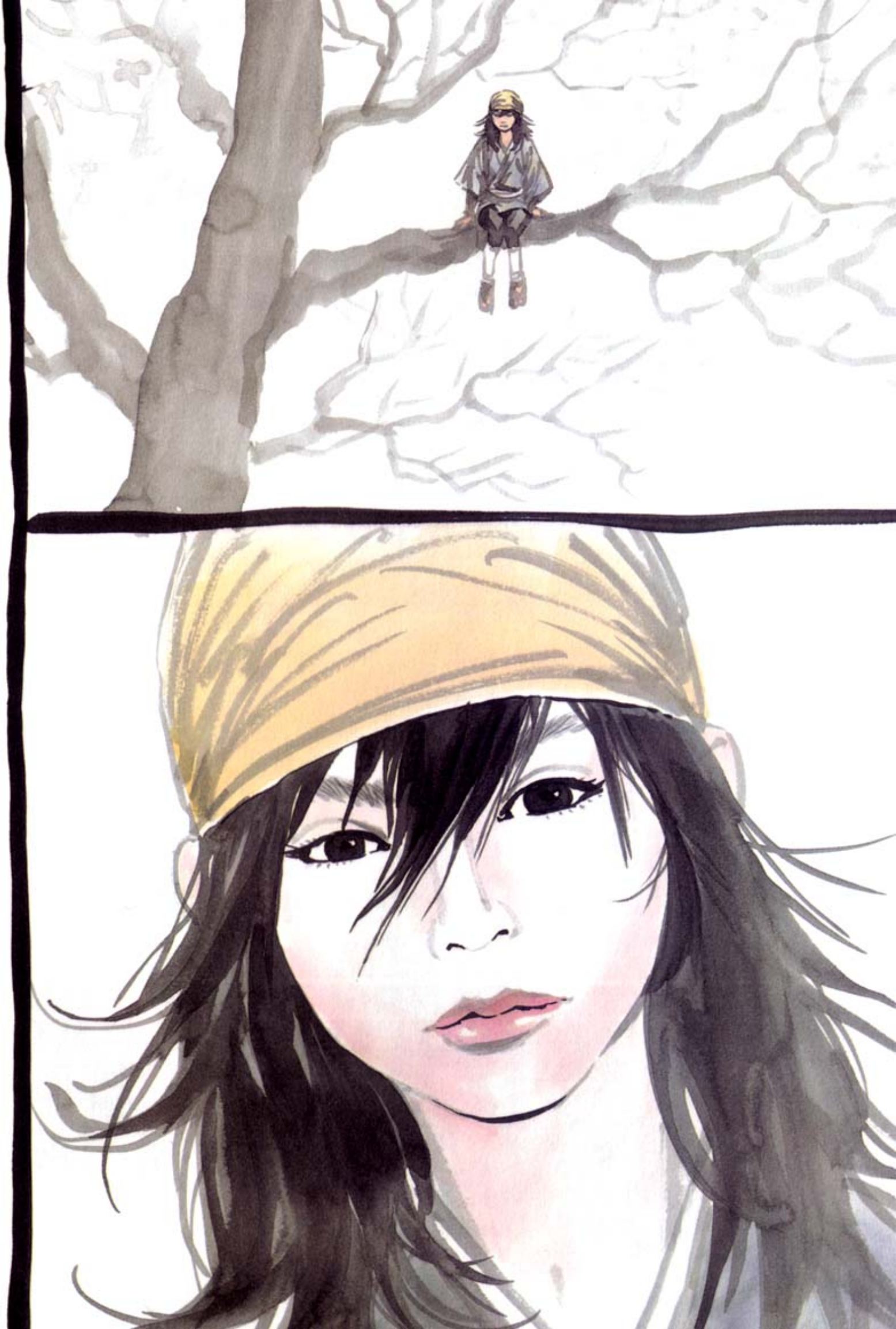


.....
KWEH
KWEH
THAT LITTLE GIRL...?
HIS MASTER?
THEY LIVE TOGETHER?
THIS DOESN'T SEEM LIKE YOU...
TSUJIKAZE KŌHEI, YOU ONCE CALLED YOURSELF A "GOD OF DEATH."
FWEE
FWEE
FWEE

KLAK
!!
KLNK
UMF!
!
FWICH

THE CHAIN AND SICKLE IS FORMIDABLE !!
AN UNUSUAL WEAPON...
WHOOSH
IF THAT CHAIN HAD HIT ITS MARK ANY LOWER, MY SWORD WOULD HAVE BEEN SNATCHED UP OUT OF MY HANDS.
SO THE CHAIN CAN ALSO BE USED TO DISARM AN OPPONENT?

MUST BE CAREFUL !!
SHF
FWICH

VWSH
VWSH
VWSH
!

VWSH

HMM...!!

SHUF

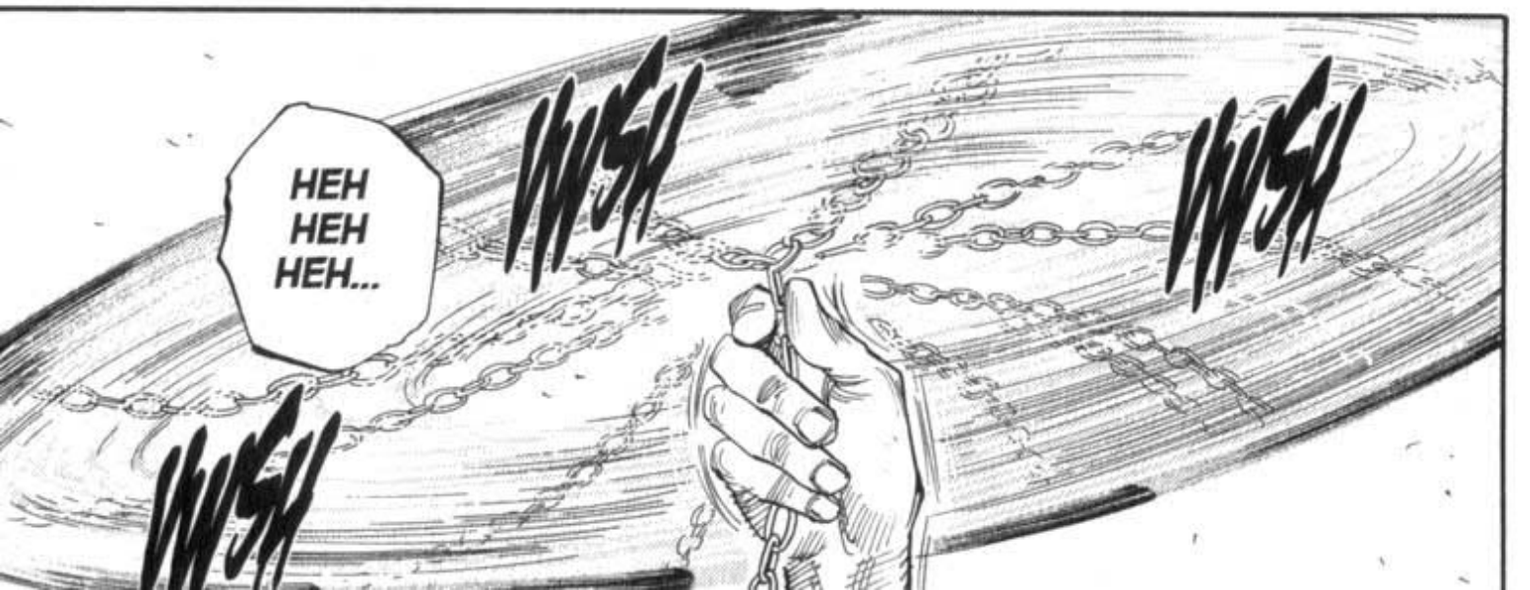
...!

SHUF
I'M LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO DIE.

...

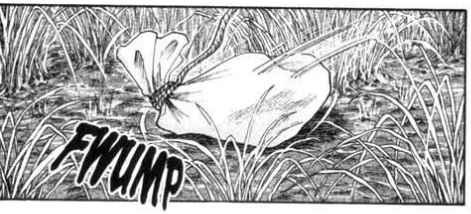
SHUF
SHUF

A CHILD...


HEH HEH HEH...
WUSH
WUSH
WUSH

WE SAW YOU IN THE TAVERN. YOU'VE GOT QUITE A LOT OF MONEY.
HEH HEH HEH...

THIS IS MY TERRITORY.
YOU MUST PAY A TOLL TO PASS THROUGH, STRANGER.
HEH HEH...
WHSH
WHSH
WHSH


FWUMP

ALL RIGHT!!

IT'S MONEY I STOLE. NO BIG LOSS TO ME...

I MAY LOOK LIKE A MERE COUNTRY BUMPKIN OF A FARMER...
...BUT I WAS AT SEKIGAHARA.
MY NAME'S SHISHIDO BAIKEN.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE SOME GOOD SAKE TONIGHT...

WHUD
YOU COME WHEN I CALL YOU, DAMN IT!!
GO COOK SOME RICE!!

HEY, BRAT.
HEY!

GRAB

!!
GASP!
AH...
!!
SLISH
ARGH!

FWICH
SLISH
WHO ...
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
SAY SOME-THING!!
ARE YOU MUTE ?!
DEATH ...

DEATH...
WHUD
THAT'S ALL...
THAT'S THE ONLY WORD I KNOW.
YOU BASTARD ...
I'M SHISHIDO BAIKEN OF THE CHAIN AND--

SLASH

Vagabond

CTHE FIRST
GENERATION

#119 The Girl and the God of Death

DRP
DRP
DRP
DRP
DAMN
...
MY WOUND'S OPENED UP AGAIN.
HMM
...

WISH

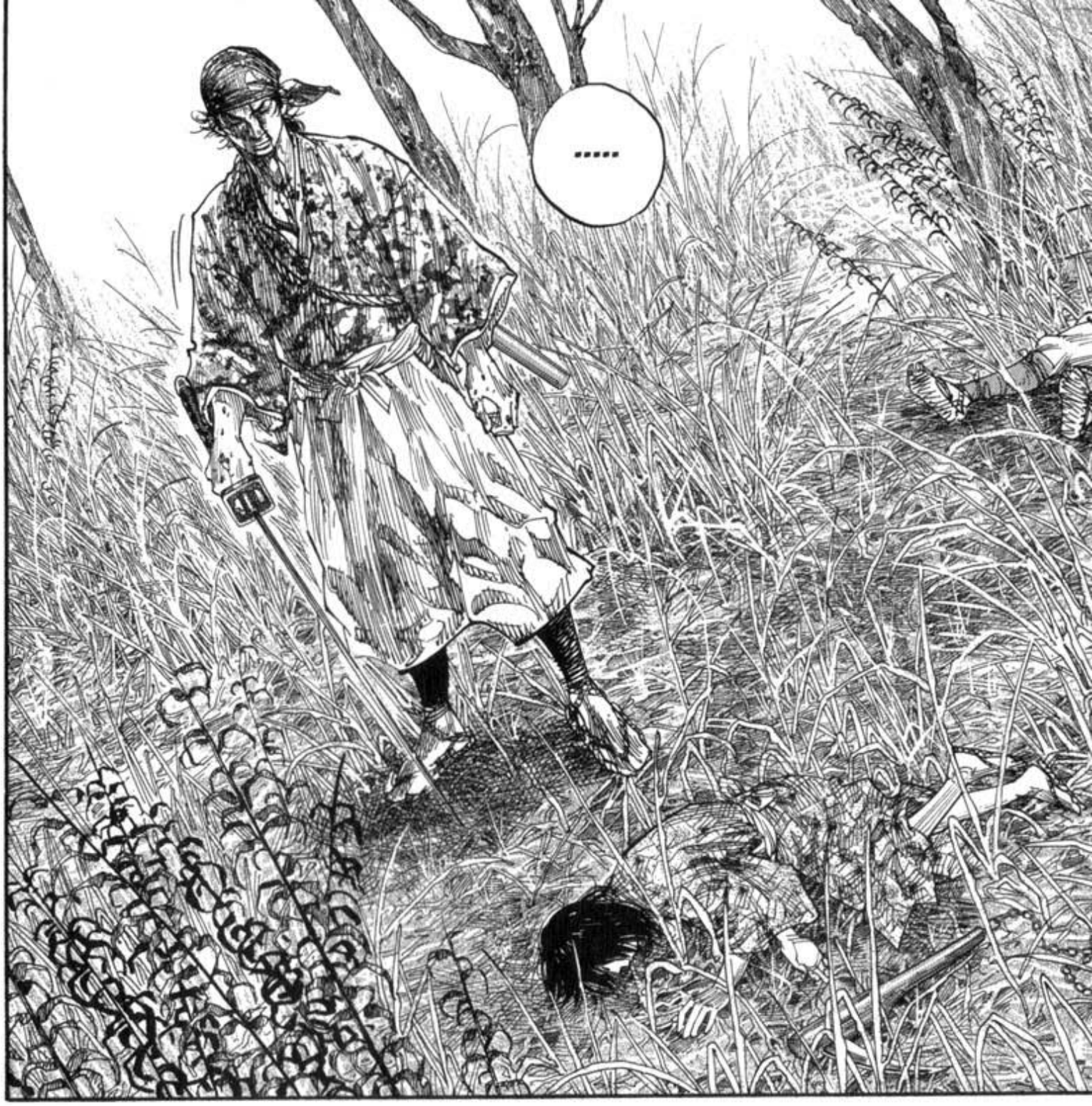
HMM
...

!
SHUF

SHUF
YOU HIS DAUGHTER ?

PLIP
PLIP
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH
POP
...
UNGH
...

WHY AREN'T YOU ATTACKING ME?
NGH ...
JUST A LITTLE KID...
WHUD
FWOM


.....

KAW
KAW
KAW

KAWW

.....
KAWW
KAWW
THE CHAIN AND SICKLE, HUH?
KCH
KCH

FOOM
KLAK
FWP
!
FWSH

FICH
TUNK

KKUD

SHF

YAHH!
ARRGH!!
?!
UMF
HUF
ARRGH!!

.....
DID SHE THINK I WAS GOING TO RAPE HER WITH HER OWN SICKLE...?
FOOL...

WHUD
...
HM?

WHUD
UMF

HMPH!

SWP

.....
DEATH ...
THAT'S ALL...
THAT'S ALL I KNOW...

.....

FWCH
FWCH

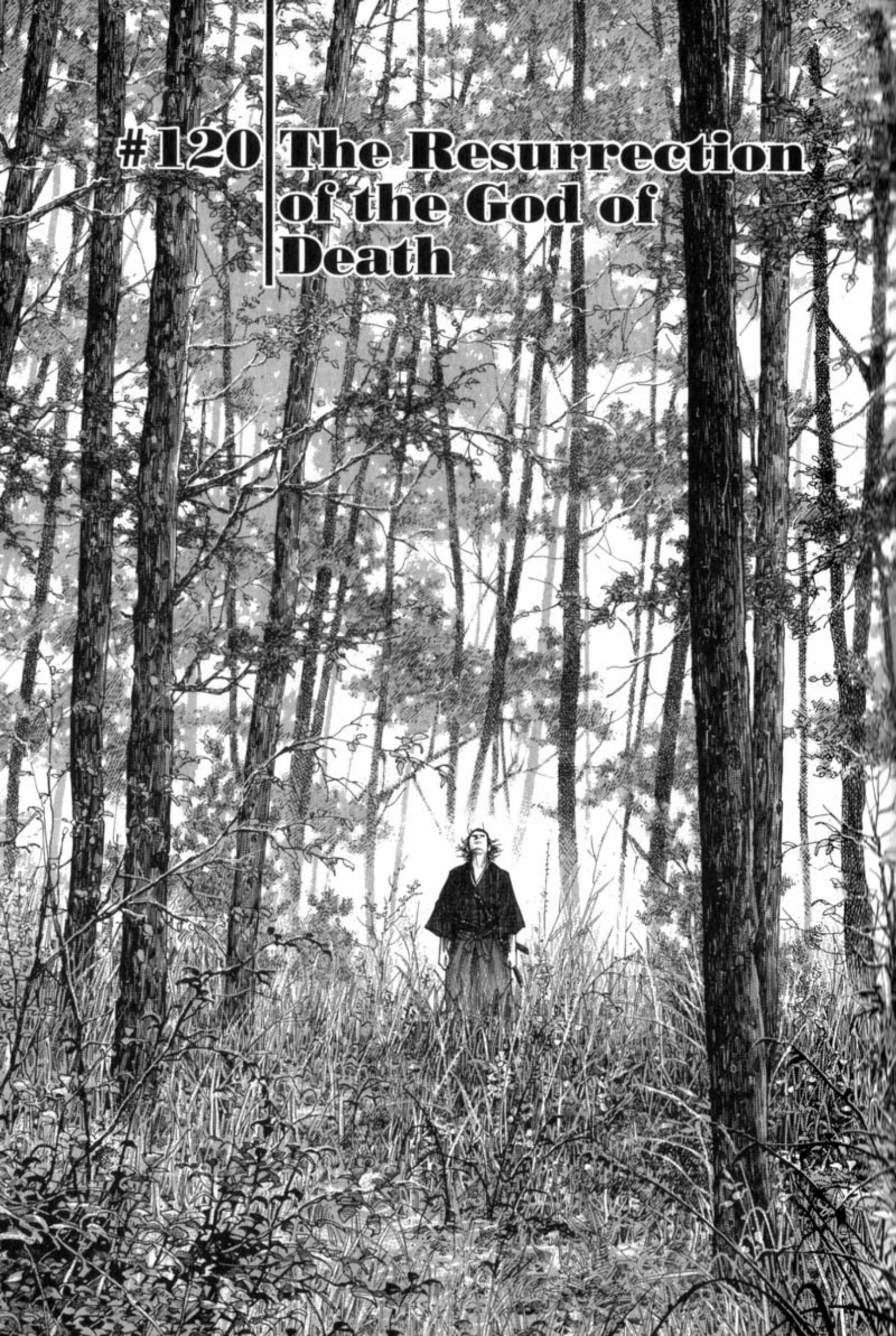
FWOOSH
KLAK
!
VWP
!!

WSSH
KLAK
FICH
FICH

FIP
!!
TUGG
HMPH...
TUGG
TAKEZŌ...
FWOM

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THESE PAST FOUR YEARS?

WHUD
!!


#120 The Resurrection of the God of Death

UMF!

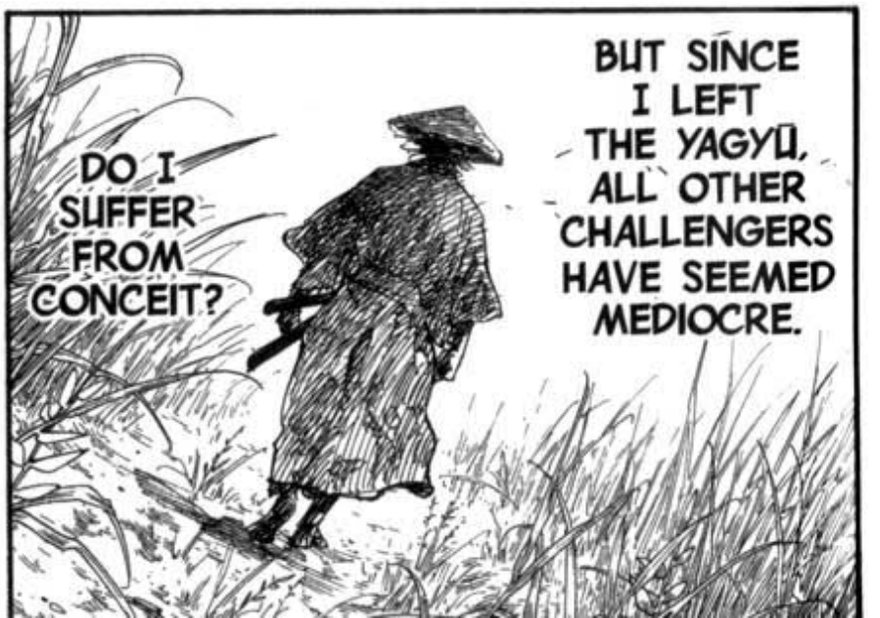
!!

ACK
...
...
HAK...
FOOL!!
FOOL!!

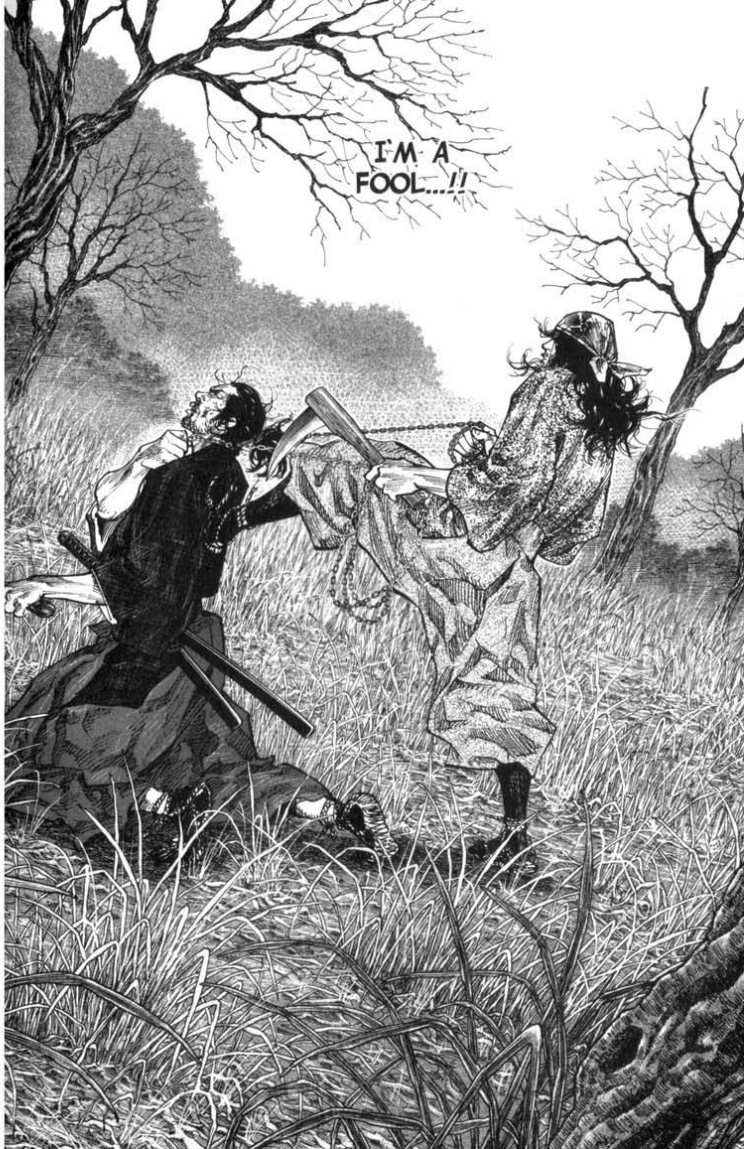
...WITHOUT BEING FULLY PREPARED TO ENGAGE MYSELF IN IT?
HOW COULD I HAVE ENTERED THIS FIGHT...

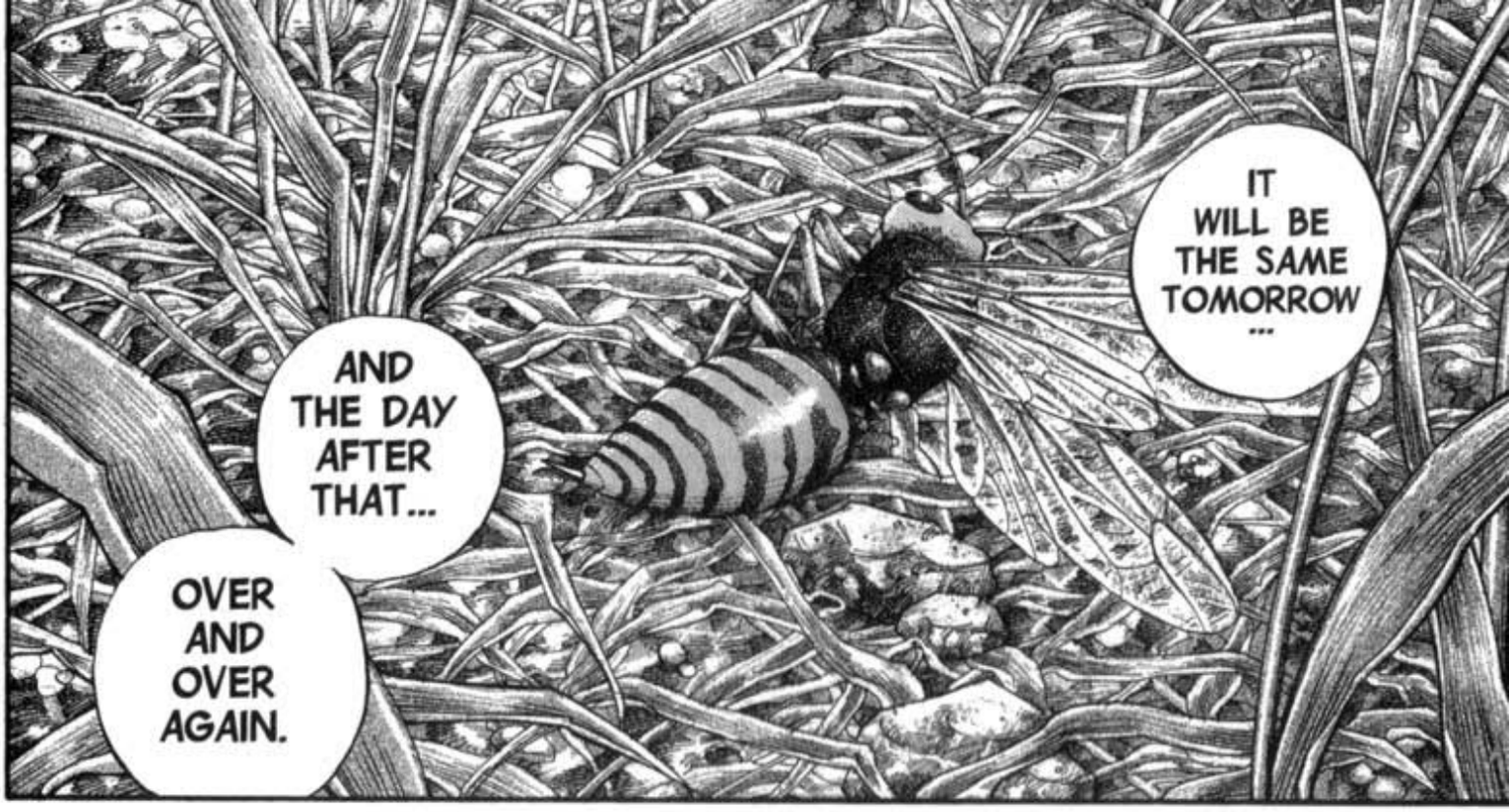
...FULLY PREPARED AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT...
I USED TO ALWAYS BE ON GUARD.

I'M NO YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI.
HOW COULD I?


DO I SUFFER FROM CONCEIT?
BUT SINCE I LEFT THE YAGYŪ, ALL OTHER CHALLENGERS HAVE SEEMED MEDIOCRE.

ON THIS DAY...
...COUNTLESS LIVES WERE BORN...
...AND JUST AS MANY LIVES WILL FADE AWAY.


I'M A FOOL...!!


IT WILL BE THE SAME TOMORROW ...
AND THE DAY AFTER THAT...
OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

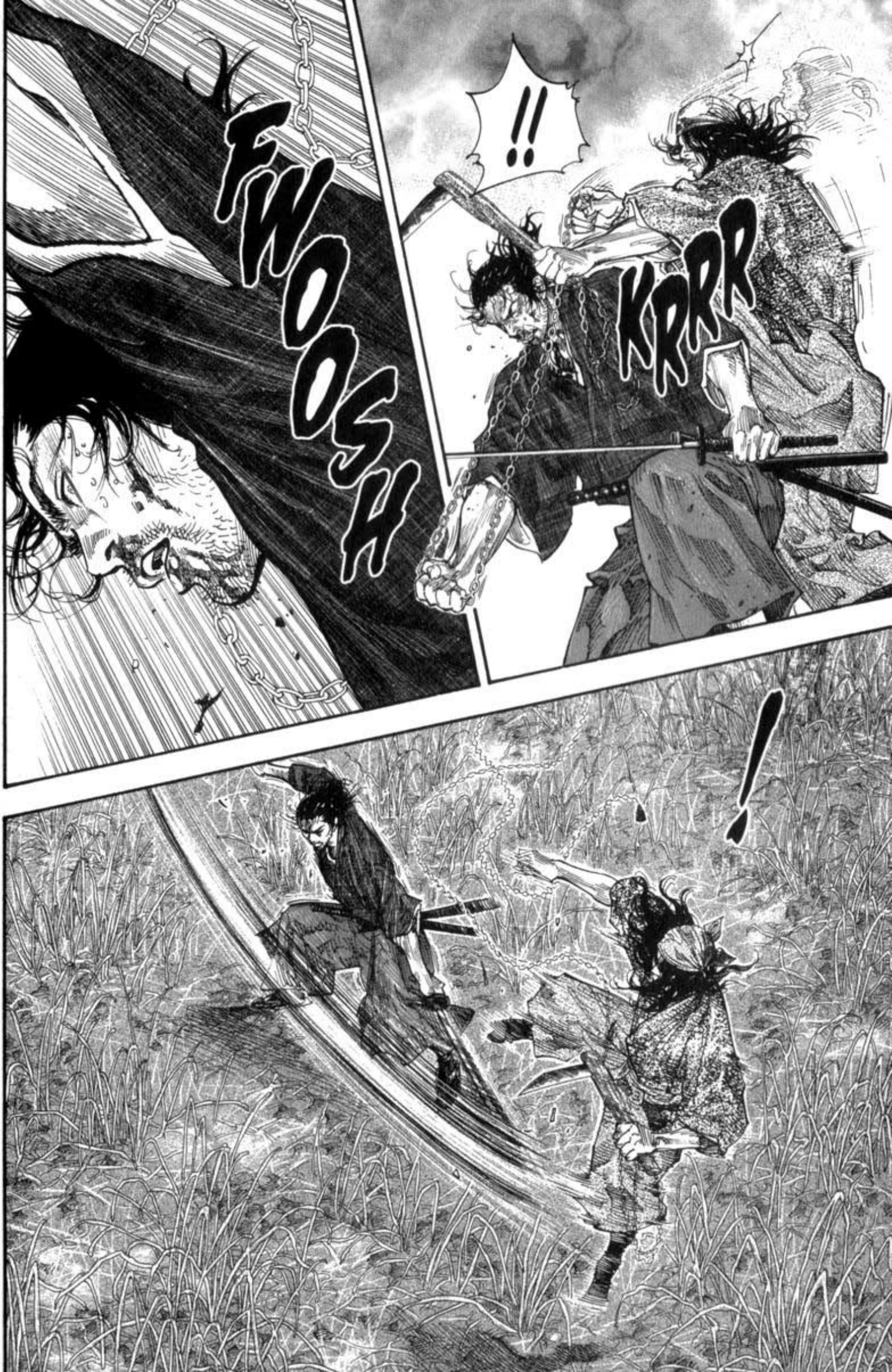
YOUR LIFE IS JUST ONE AMONGST THE MULTITUDE.
.....

DG
GRNCH

TUGG

TUGG

HM?!


FWOSH
!!
KRRR
!

!!
FWCH
SHF
WHUD

FICH

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

SUCH INCREDIBLE STRENGTH!
INCREDIBLE...

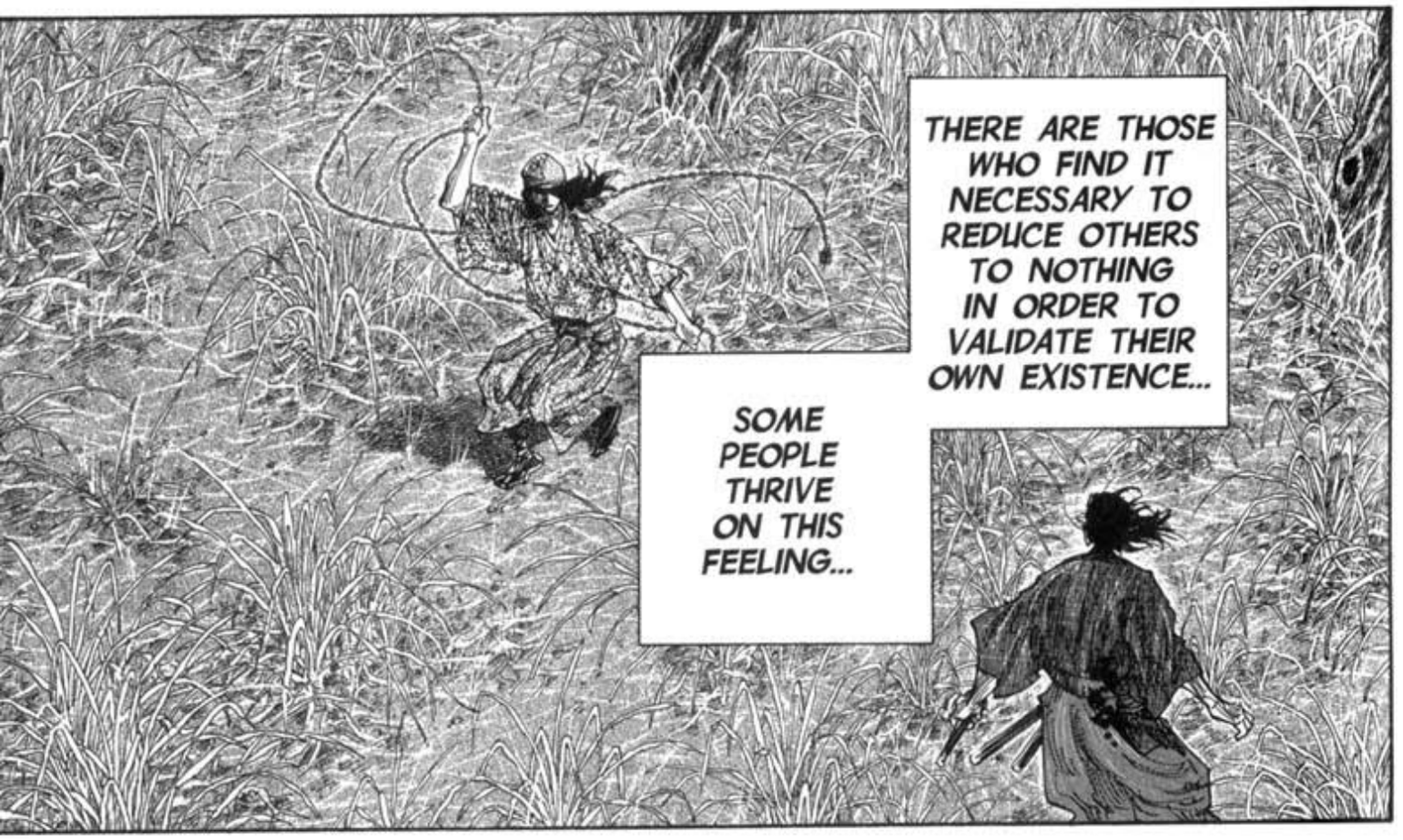
SHUF SHUF
!!

IN THE MIDST OF MORTAL COMBAT-- MUSASHI WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SPARE THE CHILD ONCE SHE WAS WITHIN RANGE OF HIS SWORD.
THIS THREAT WAS THE BEST HE COULD DO FOR HER.

I'LL KILL YOU, YOU LITTLE BRAT!!

SHISHIDO BAIKEN TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS DISTRACTION...
!!

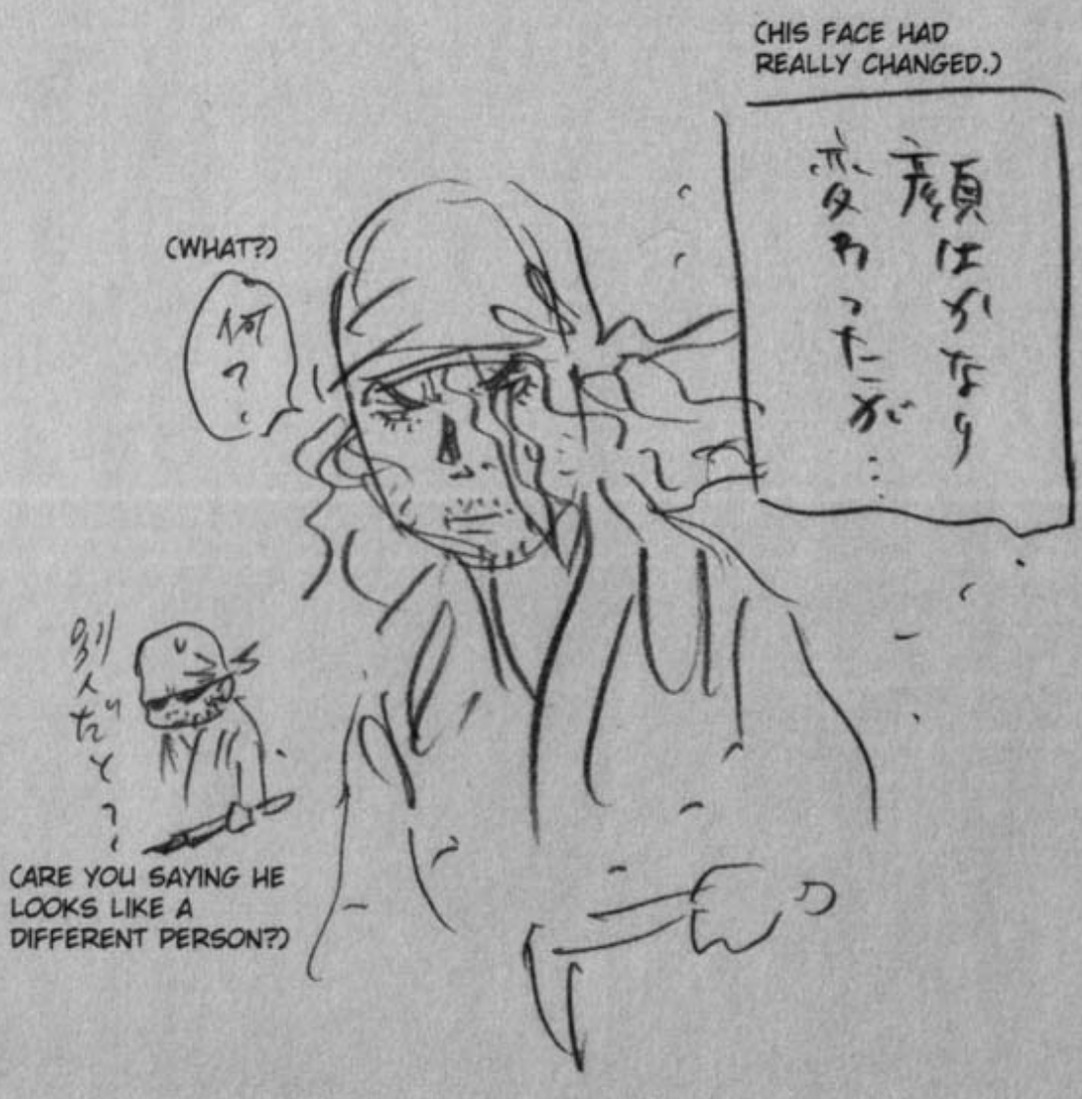
TO TAKE THE LIFE OF ANOTHER...


THERE ARE THOSE WHO FIND IT NECESSARY TO REDUCE OTHERS TO NOTHING IN ORDER TO VALIDATE THEIR OWN EXISTENCE...
SOME PEOPLE THRIVE ON THIS FEELING...

SOMETHING HAD BEEN TRIGGERED INSIDE OF SHISHIDO BAIKEN, MASTER OF THE CHAIN AND SICKLE...

...THE GOD OF DEATH CALLED TSUJIKAZE KŌHEI HAD REAWAKENED FROM WITHIN.

Vagabond


(HIS FACE HAD REALLY CHANGED.)
顔がかなり変わったが…
(WHAT?)
ハア？
別人だと？
(ARE YOU SAYING HE LOOKS LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON?)

HEH
HEH
HEH...
THAT TWISTED SMILE OF YOURS...
I REMEMBER IT WELL...
...FROM SHIPPŌ-JI TEMPLE IN MIYAMOTO VILLAGE.

#121 Two Swords

NOW THAT AN OPPONENT OF SIMILAR MIND WAS STANDING BEFORE HIM...
...MUSASHI'S FIGHTING INSTINCTS WERE FINALLY TRIGGERED.

AND IN TURN, MUSASHI'S PRESENCE FURTHER PROVOKED BAIKEN...OR MORE APPROPRIATELY... TSUJIKAZE KŌHEI.

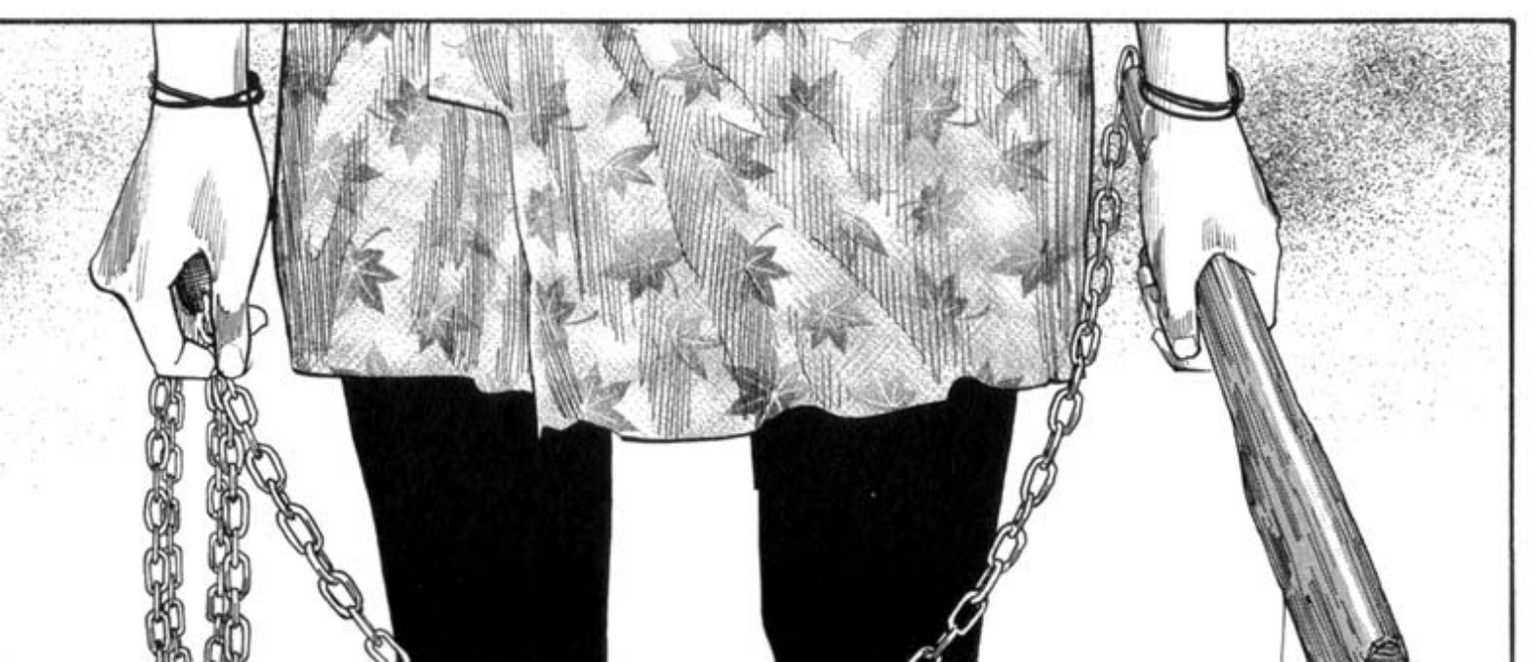
.....

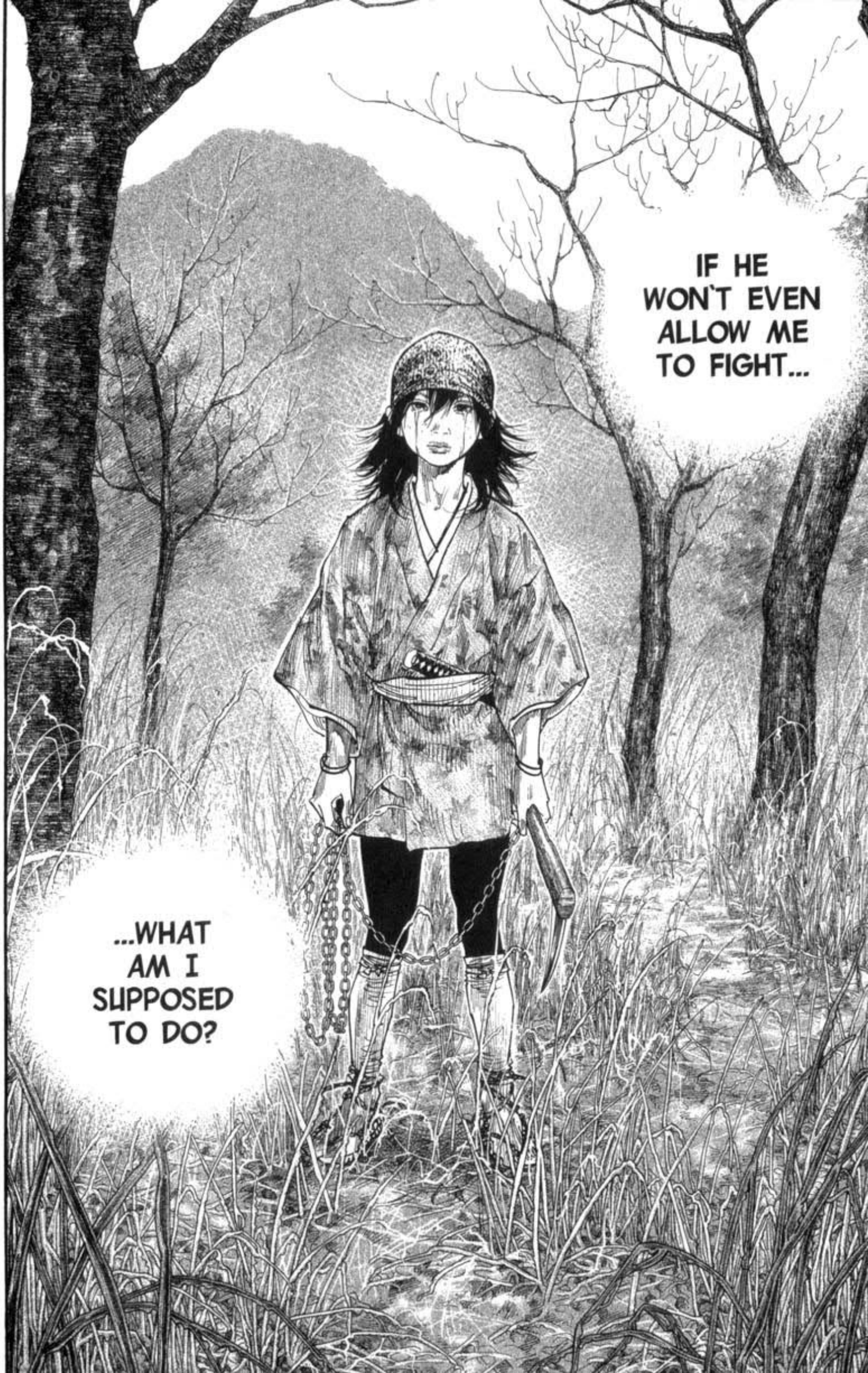
THIS MUST END...
ONE OF US MUST DIE.

RINDŌ!
STAY BACK.
IF HE USES YOU AS A SHIELD...
I WON'T HESITATE TO KILL YOU!

HE'S
NOT MINE
ANYMORE.

THAT
MAN CALLED
"TAKEZŌ"
TOOK HIM
FROM ME.




IF HE WON'T EVEN ALLOW ME TO FIGHT...
...WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

FICH

THE CHAIN IS FAR LONGER THAN INSHUN'S SPEAR. IF I STAY OUT OF HIS RANGE, IT'S OBVIOUS MY SWORD CAN'T TOUCH HIM.

I CAN'T SEE THE RANGE OF THE WEIGHT!!
THE WEIGHT !!

CHAIN...
THE WEIGHT...

GASP!

MUST NOT GET DIS-TRACTED.

THE IRON WEIGHT AT THE END OF THE CHAIN COULD CRUSH A SKULL WITH A SINGLE BLOW.

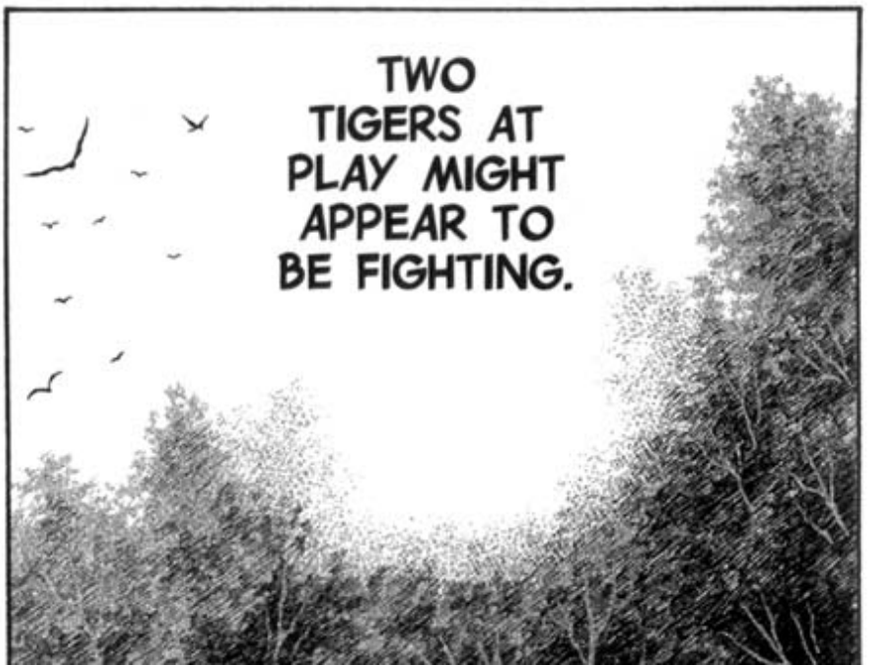
AND HE CAN ADJUST HIS REACH AT WILL.

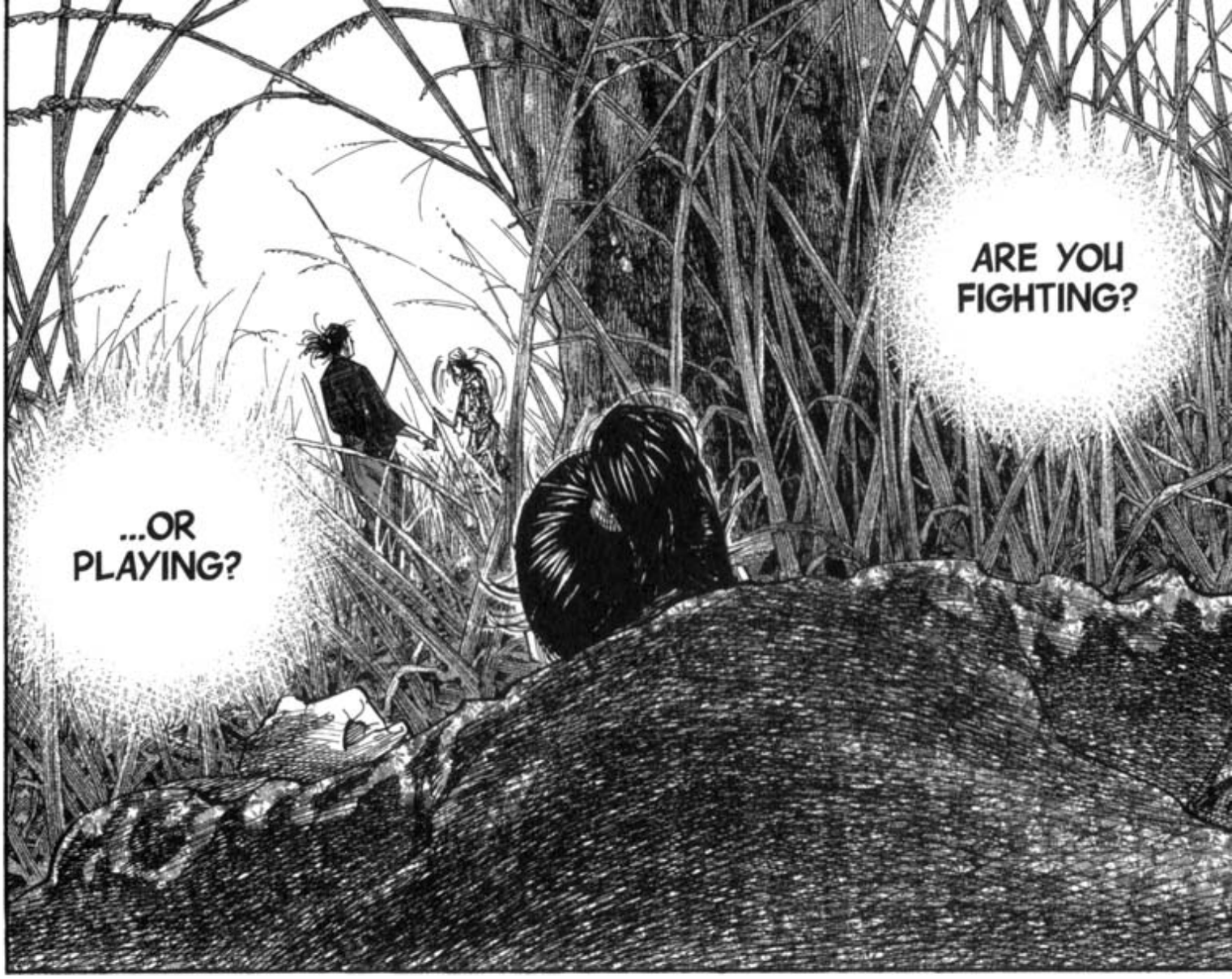
RIGHT, TAKUAN?
"PREOCCUPIED WITH A SINGLE LEAF, YOU WON'T SEE THE TREE."
FICH
IF I FOCUS TOO MUCH ON THE CHAIN, THE SICKLE WILL CUT ME DOWN!!
THE GOD OF DEATH IS SMACKING HIS LIPS.

.....

FICH
FICH

WHAT ABOUT YOU TWO?


TWO TIGERS AT PLAY MIGHT APPEAR TO BE FIGHTING.


ARE YOU FIGHTING?
...OR PLAYING?

I CAN'T STAND ON THE SAME LEVEL WITH YOU!

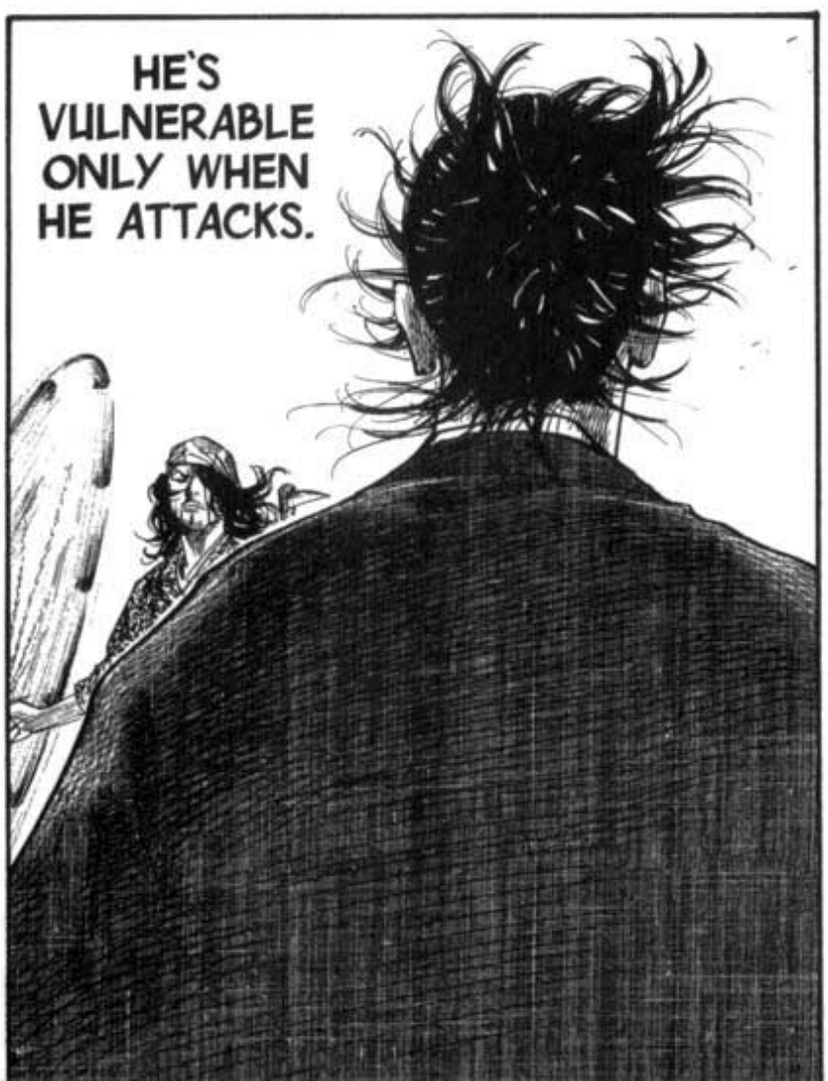
I HAVE TO TAKE THE STEP I DIDN'T TAKE LAST TIME.

OTHER-WISE...

BUT I MUST MOVE FORWARD, TAKEZŌ.

I'M PAYING YOU BACK...!!

...YOU'LL BE FOREVER BEYOND MY REACH!!

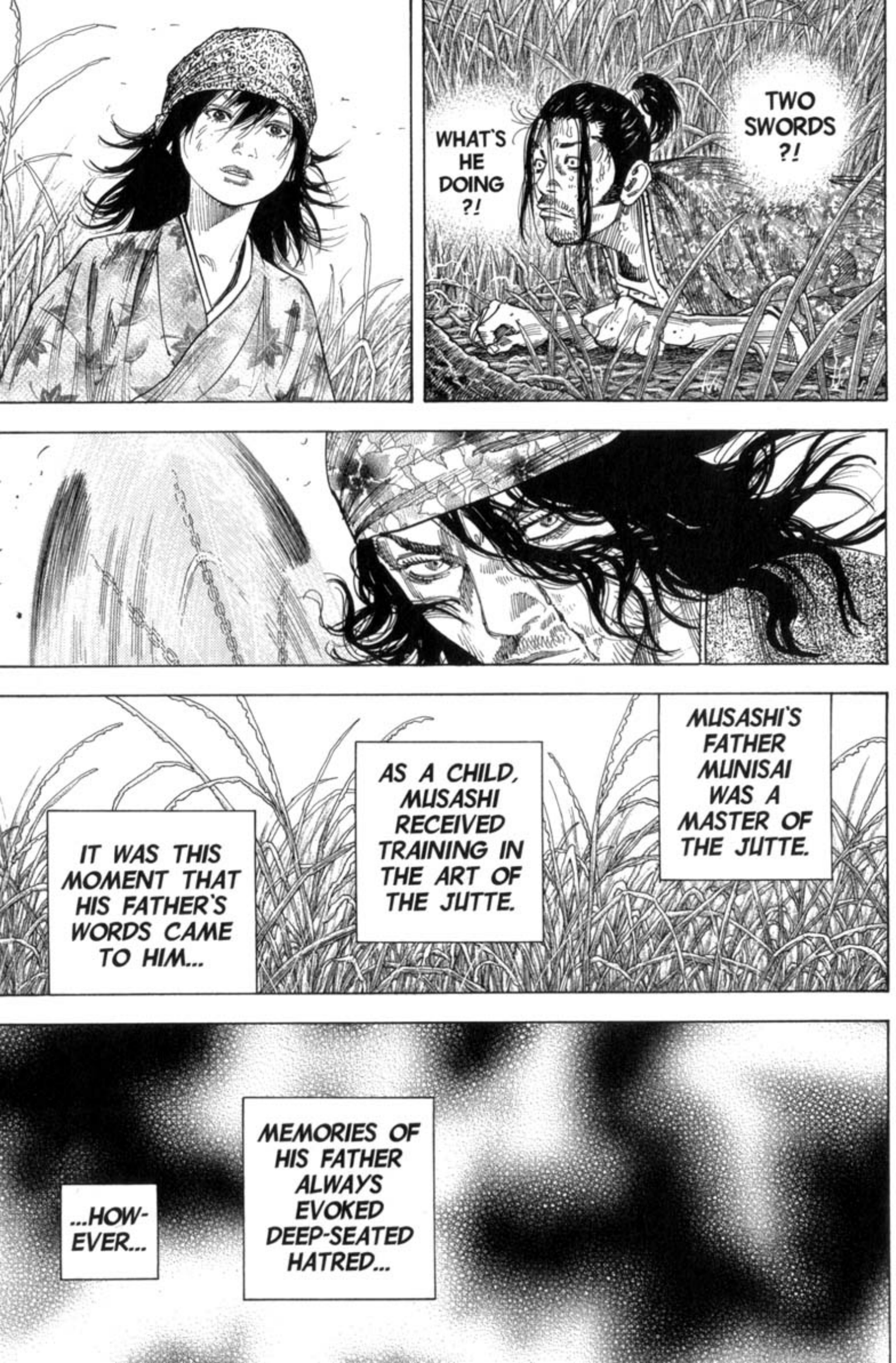

HE'S VULNERABLE ONLY WHEN HE ATTACKS.

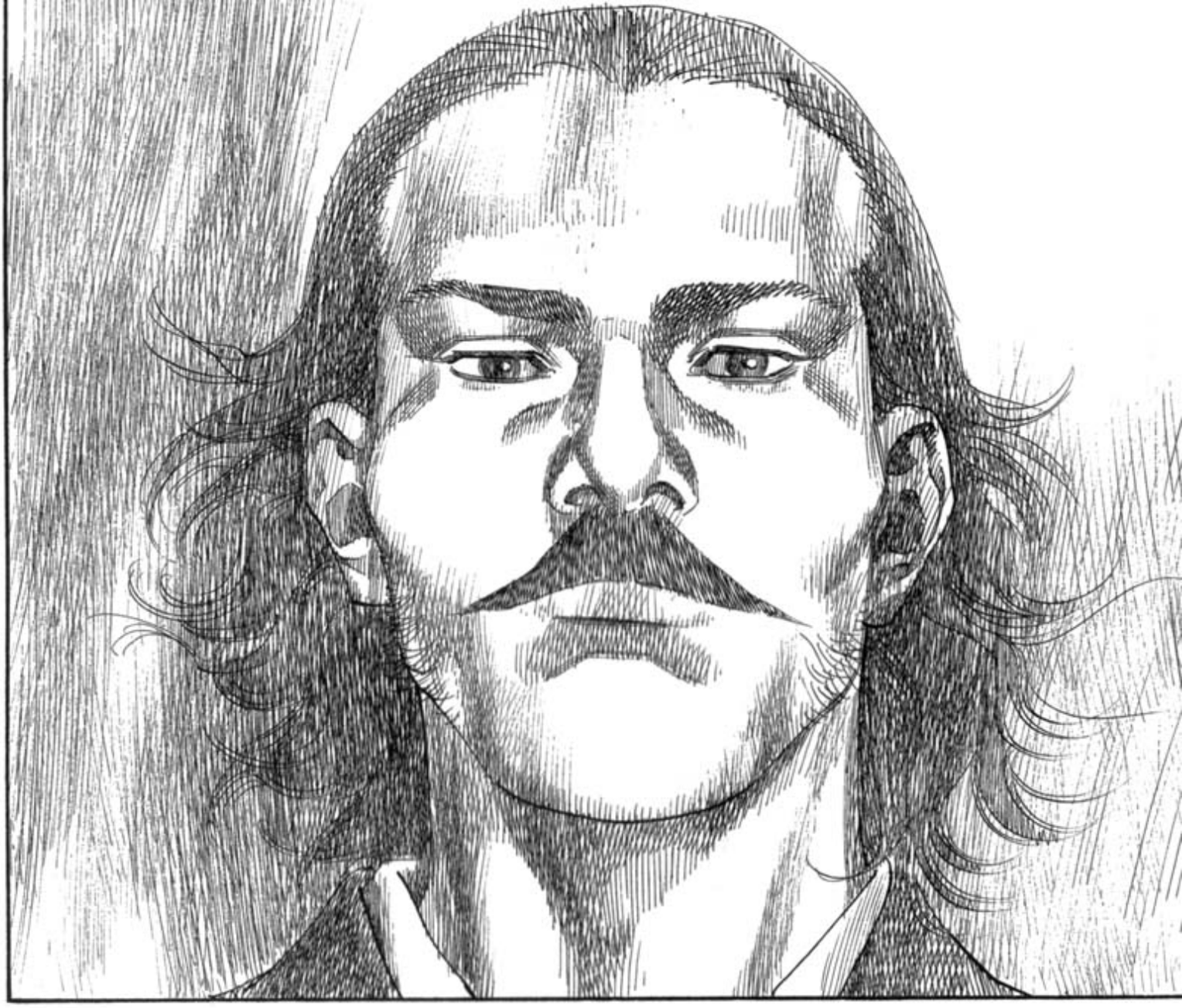
DO NOT BE DISTRACTED.

...HE HAS THE ADVANTAGE.
AND IN TERMS OF ATTACKS...
I MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE...
I MUST MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

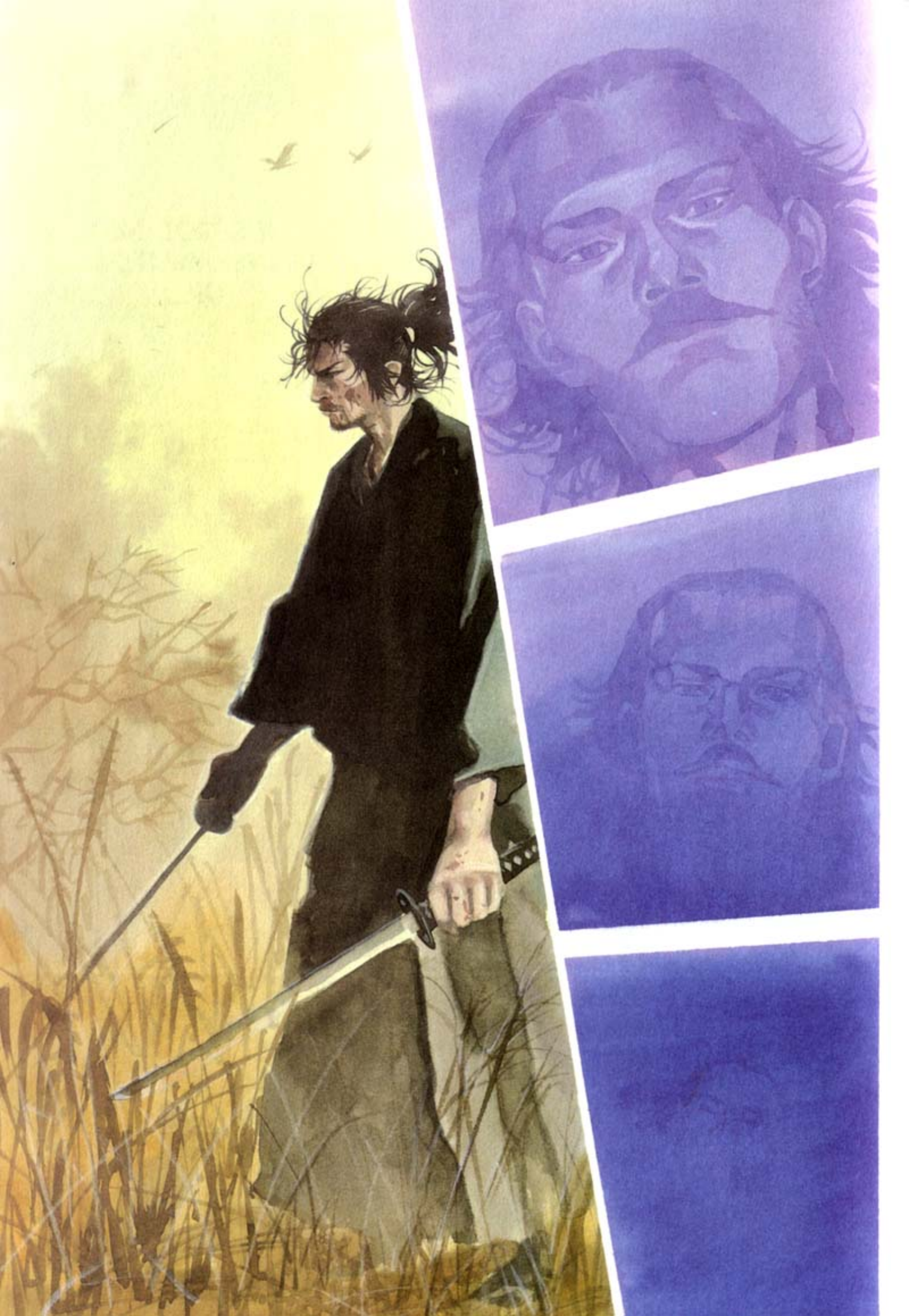
THE JUTTE MERGES THE TWO INTO ONE!

ATTACK AND DEFENSE...


WHAT'S HE DOING ?!
TWO SWORDS ?!
MUSASHI'S FATHER MUNISAI WAS A MASTER OF THE JUTTE.
AS A CHILD, MUSASHI RECEIVED TRAINING IN THE ART OF THE JUTTE.
IT WAS THIS MOMENT THAT HIS FATHER'S WORDS CAME TO HIM...
MEMORIES OF HIS FATHER ALWAYS EVOKED DEEP-SEATED HATRED...
...HOW-EVER...

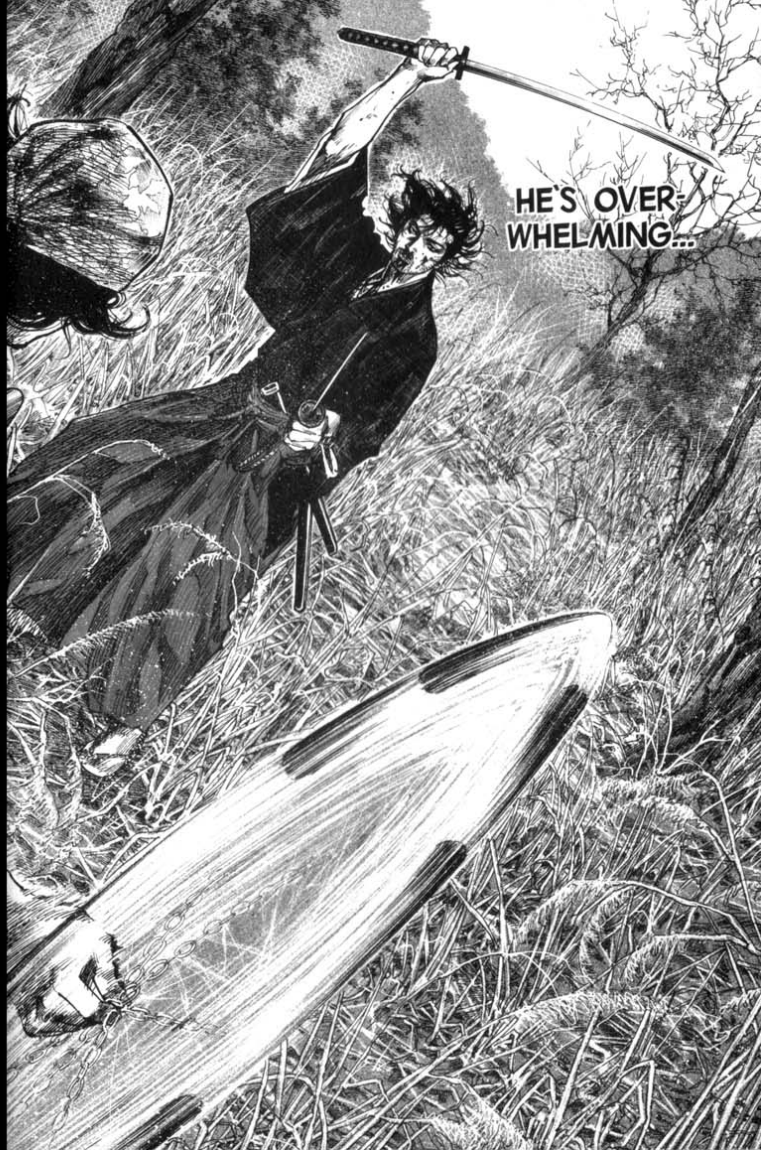


THIS TIME, AS MUSASHI HELD THE TWO SWORDS IN HIS HANDS, A WAVE OF SERENITY WASHED OVER HIM.



.....
#122 Moths
HE'S GOT NO VULNERABILITIES... OR...
IS HE LEAVING HIMSELF COMPLETELY OPEN?

THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP


HE'S OVER-
WHELMING...

KRICH

THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP

MY PURPOSE IN LIFE WAS TO KILL MY OLDER BROTHER TENMA.
BUT YOU GOT TO HIM FIRST.
SO...

.....

.....
WE'RE VERY MUCH ALIKE.

HUF
HUF
HUF

THAT'S WHY MY SOLE PURPOSE BECAME TO KILL *YOU* INSTEAD.
THAT'S WHAT I USED TO THINK.

BUT I WAS WRONG.

!!

TAKEZŌ ...
I WANTED TO KILL YOU...
...BECAUSE YOU INVITE BLOODSHED.

FIGHTING YOU SO MANY YEARS LATER, I NOW UNDER-STAND...

THMP THMP
...!!
THMP THMP
HUF
KWSH
KWSH
HUF
KWSH
KWSH

THAT'S WHY WE'RE DRAWN TO EACH OTHER, TAKEZÔ!!
WE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT FIGHTING.
THAT'S WHY...

HUF
WE PROVOKE DEATH.
HUF
YOU AND I ARE THE SAME.
WE LIKE TO FIGHT. WE CRAVE BLOOD.

LOOK AT YOURSELF ...
SHUF
YOU AND I...
YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME...
AS FAR AS THE REST OF THE WORLD'S CONCERNED, WE'RE WORTHLESS.
WE'RE JUST LIKE MOTHS.

OR A GOD OF DEATH.
I'M NOT TAKEZO ANYMORE.
MY NAME IS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
NO!!
YOU'RE STILL A DEMON CHILD, RIGHT?
HEH HEH...

FWOOSH
I'M BEYOND THE HATRED.

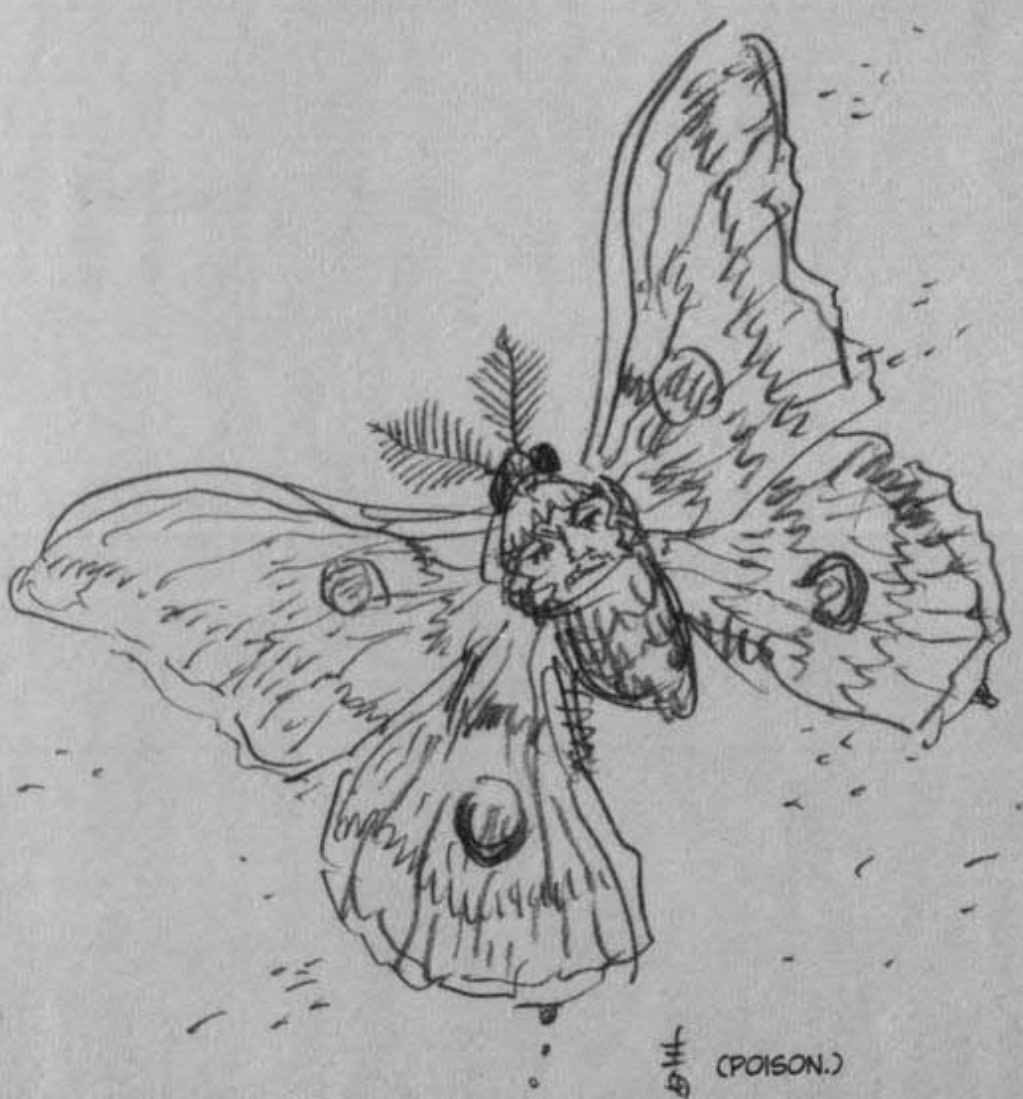
LOOK HOW EXCITED YOU'RE GETTING...
...AS YOU TRY TO ANALYZE THE BEST WAY TO KILL ME!!
...!!

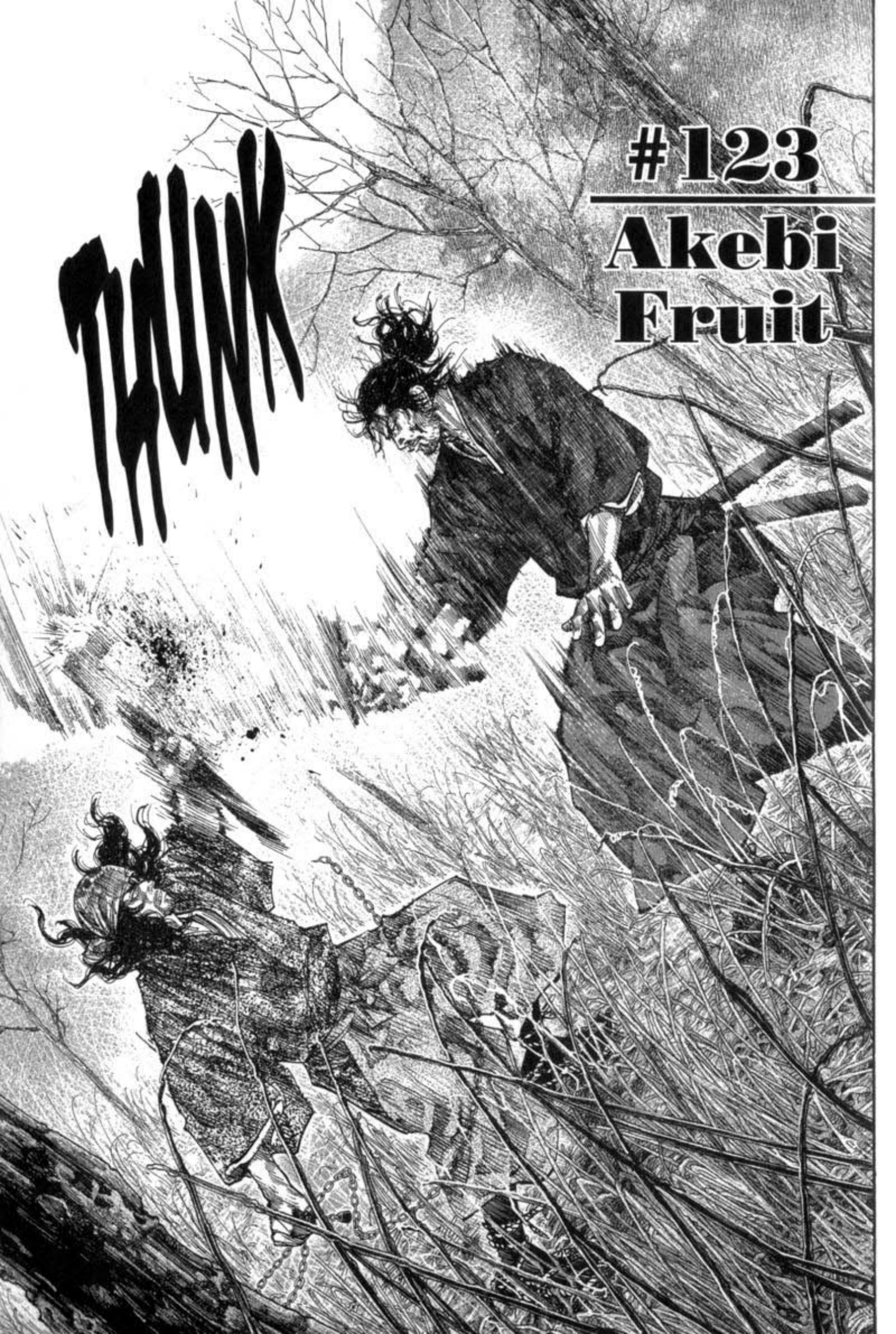
KLACK
GOODBYE, FATHER.
TUNK
KCHINK

I WON'T BE HAUNTED BY YOU ANYMORE.

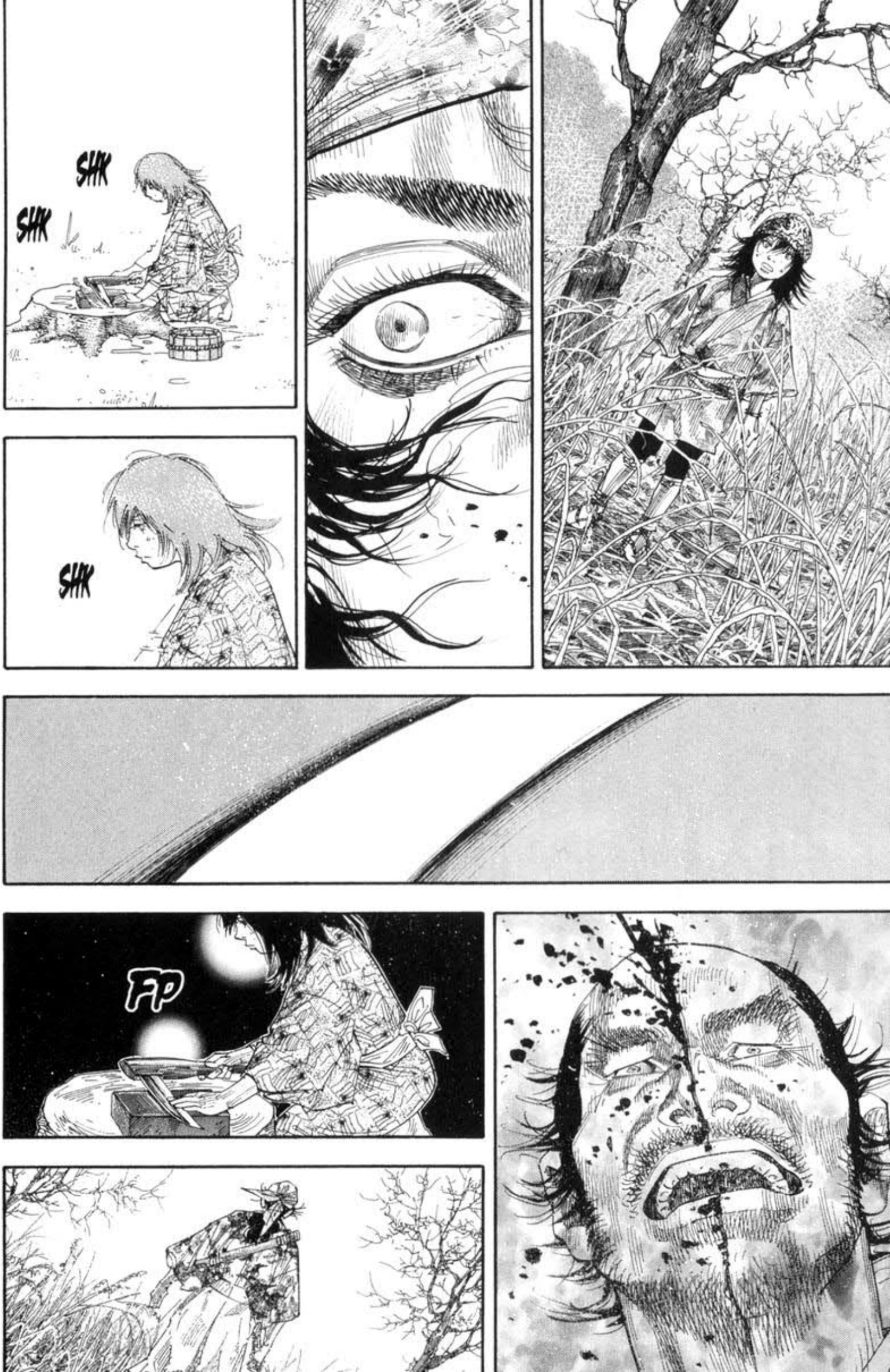
THUNK

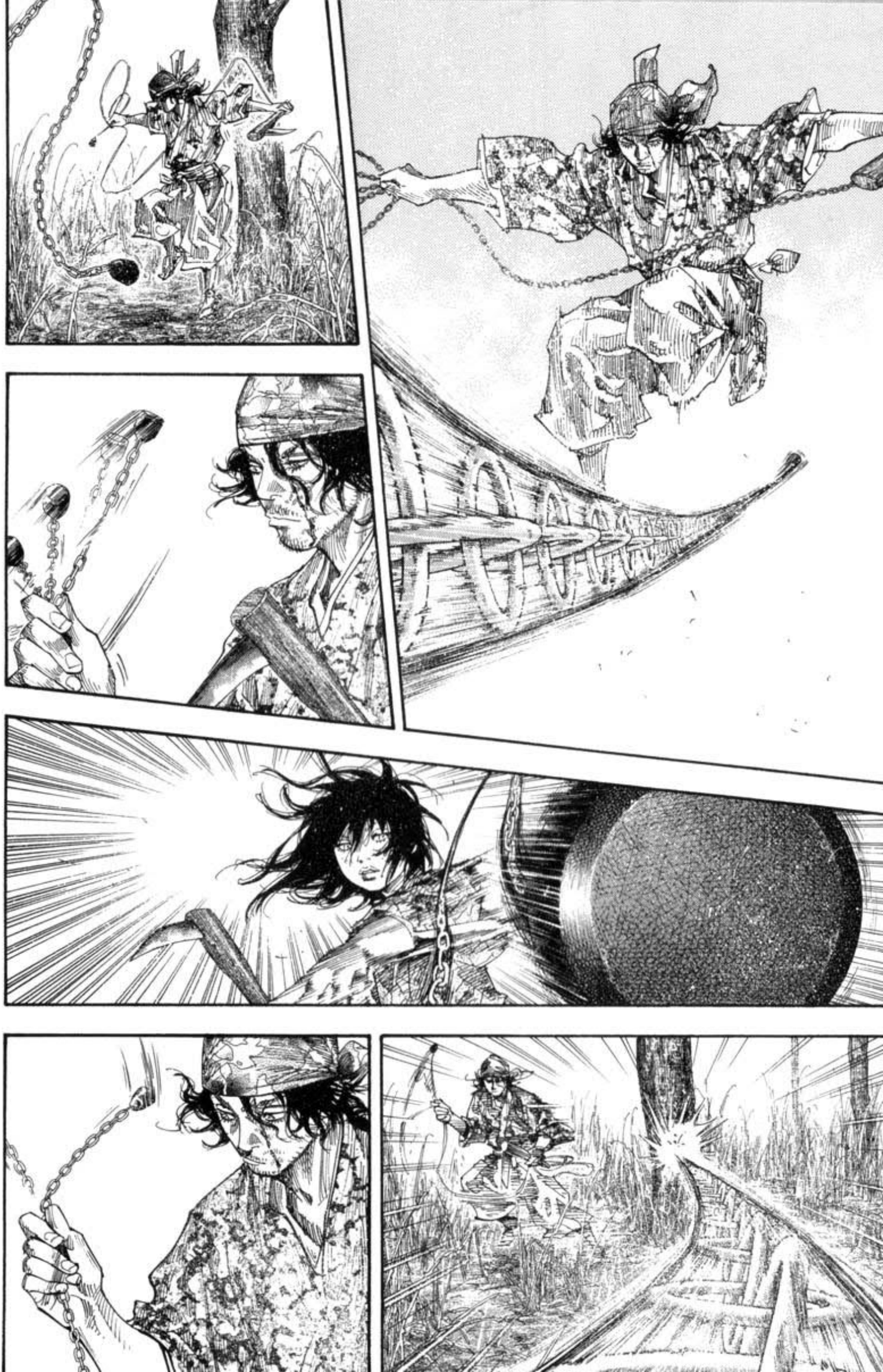
Vagabond

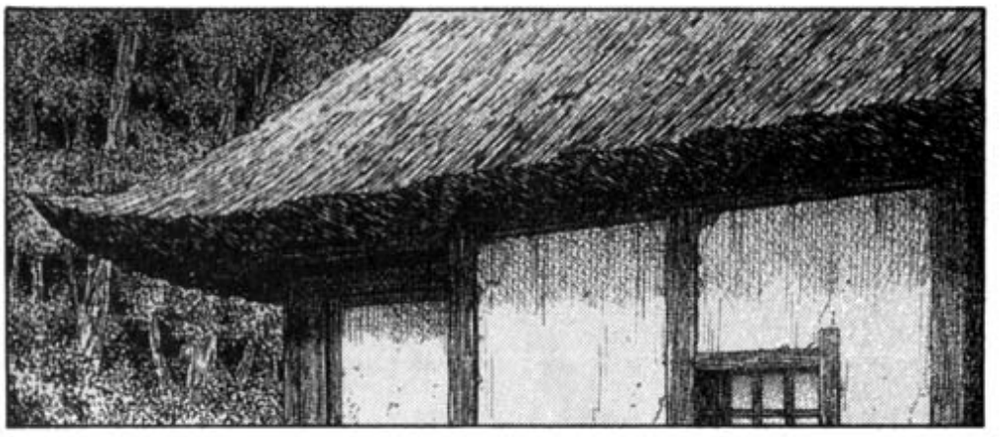

(POISON.)


TRUNK
#123
Akebi
Fruit

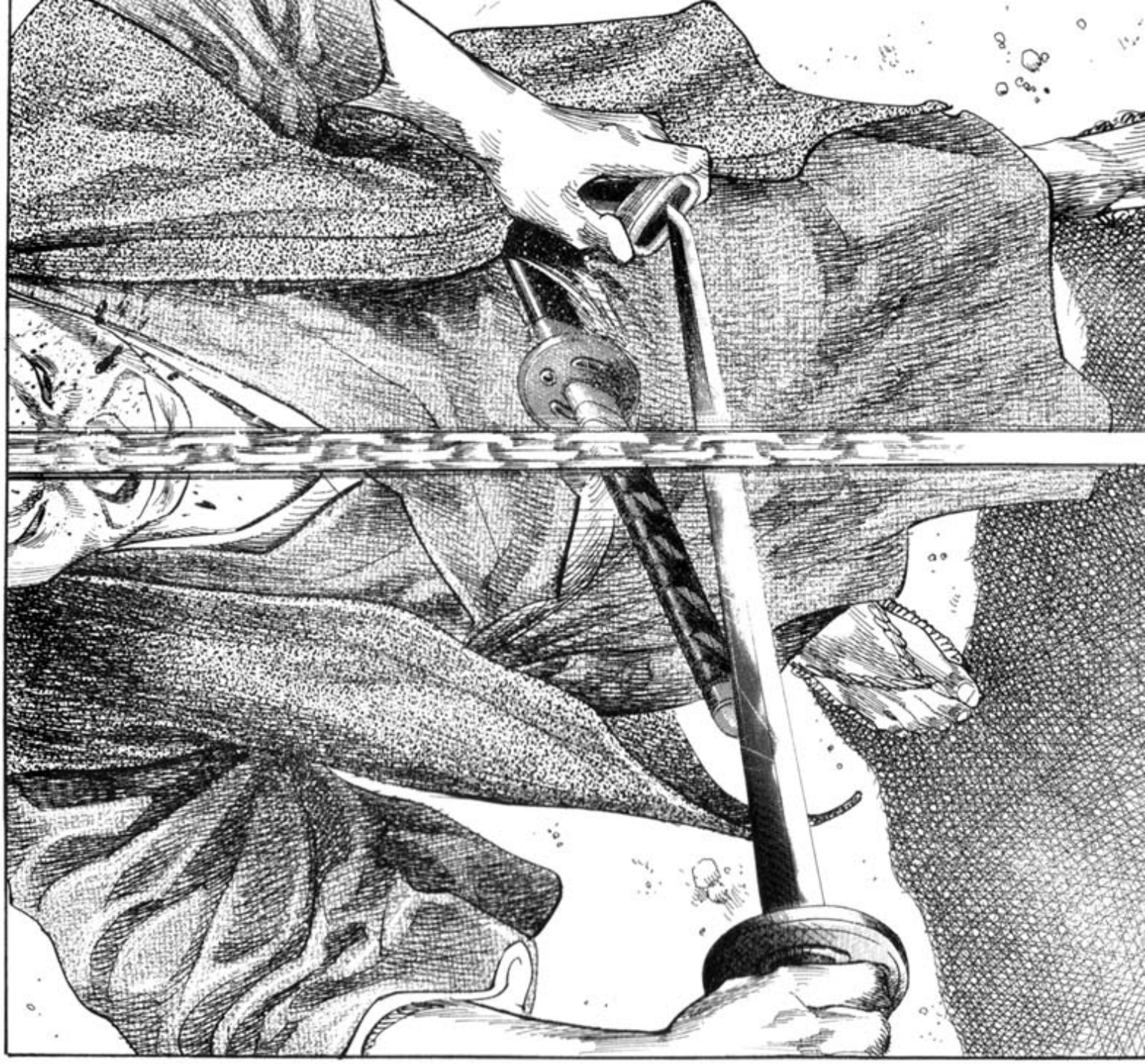
THUD
THP


SHK
SHK
SHK
FP





FINE! THAT MAKES IT EASIER FOR US!!
WE'RE JUST TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING.
WE'VE NO GRUDGE AGAINST YOU, BUT YOU'RE A DEAD MAN!!
.....
...THEY'VE SPENT WHAT LITTLE MONEY THEY HAVE HIRING US!!
WHERE ARE YOUR MEN?!
...
YOU AND YOUR BANDITS HAVE BEEN WREAKING HAVOC ON THE VILLAGE DOWN BELOW.
THE VILLAGERS ARE PETRIFIED...
SO YOU'RE BAIKEN!!
!



!!

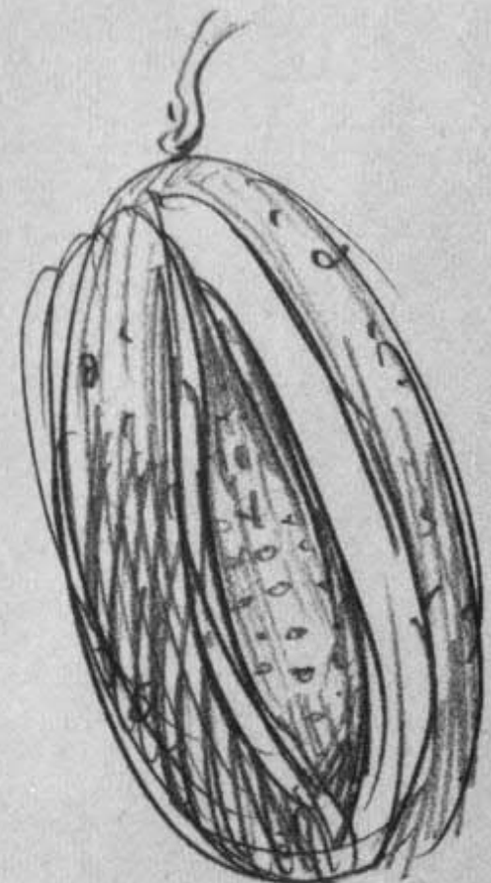
WHAT THE HELL?!
YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS STRONG!!

I'M...
...SHISHIDO BAIKEN.

HEY...
.....
.....

SLURP
SLURP

Vagabond



CAKEBI FRUIT)

#124

Connections

PLSH
SPLSH
HUF
HUF

HUF
FICH
HUF
HUF

!
?!
TUNK
SHUF
SHUF

SHF

?!

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU ?!

!!

IT'S ONE THING FOR YOU TO HIDE AND SPY ON US FROM AFAR.
BUT HOW DARE YOU INTERFERE?

.....

IT'S ME, TAKEZŌ...
IT'S ME...
HE KNEW I WAS HERE?!
I WAS JUST TRYING TO HELP...
I THOUGHT I'D PAY YOU BACK...
IT'S ME!!
NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU BECOME...

NO MATTER HOW GREAT YOU ARE...
...WE'RE STILL CONNECTED, AREN'T WE?

.....
FWOOSH
!

THUD

WHY...?
.....

GRP

WHY DID I SAVE HER JUST NOW?

WHY DIDN'T I KILL RINDŌ BACK THEN...?

SPRT
SPRT

WARM...

BLOOD...

SLISH

RAISED IN WAR AND TURMOIL.
THMP THMP
THMP THMP
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN BORN OF HATRED, TOO.

#125
Spiral

THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
WARMTH
...
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
FWOOSH
RINDŌ
...

I CAN'T EVEN HOLD A SWORD ANYMORE...
NOW...
HUF
HUF
NOW I WON'T...
HUF
...HAVE TO FIGHT ANYMORE.

I'M THROUGH WITH IT...

...THIS SPIRAL OF DEATH AND KILLING.

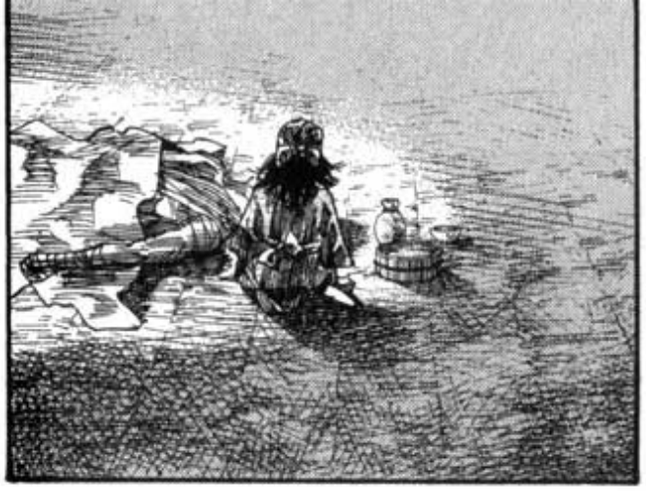
TAKEZŌ...
?!
STOP MY BLEEDING ...
HUF
HUF
SPIRAL ...
...OF DEATH AND KILLING...
PLEASE...
HUF
HUF
STOP MY BLEEDING.
HUF
HUF

...HELP US...
SAVE US.
PLEASE...

KAWW
KAWW
KAWW

FWOOSH

FWOOSH
FWOOSH
WOULD I BE ABLE TO PLEAD FOR MY LIFE TO AN OPPONENT WHO JUST CUT ME DOWN?



WOULD I BE ABLE TO DO THAT...

...IN ORDER TO PROTECT SOMEONE I CARE FOR?

WOOSH

I DEFEATED SHISHIDO BAIKEN...
I DEFEATED TSUJIKAZE KŌHEI.

AND FOR WHAT?

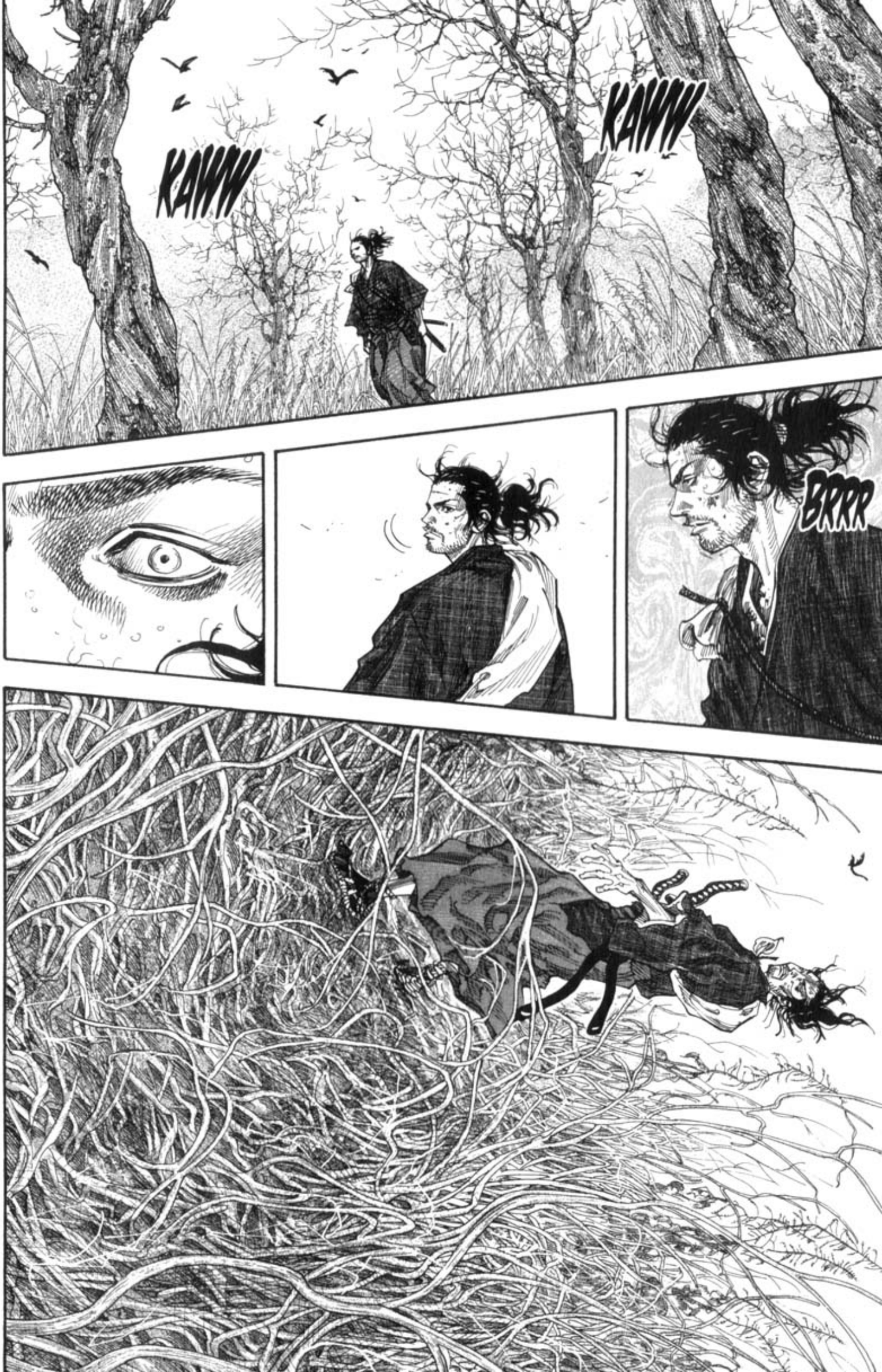
FWOOOOSH

TAKEZŌ...

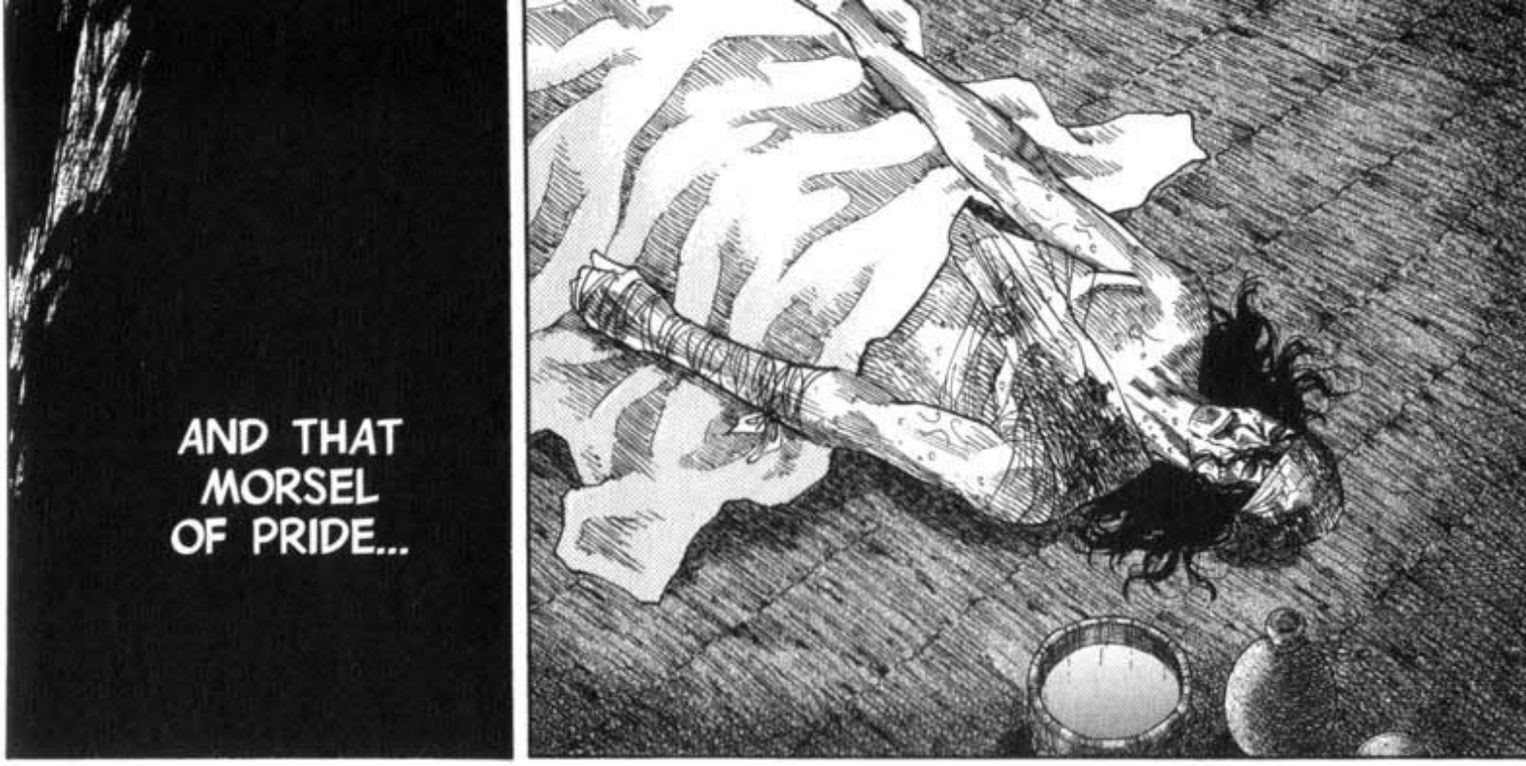
NO ONE COULD EVER BEAT ME IN THE ART OF KILLING.

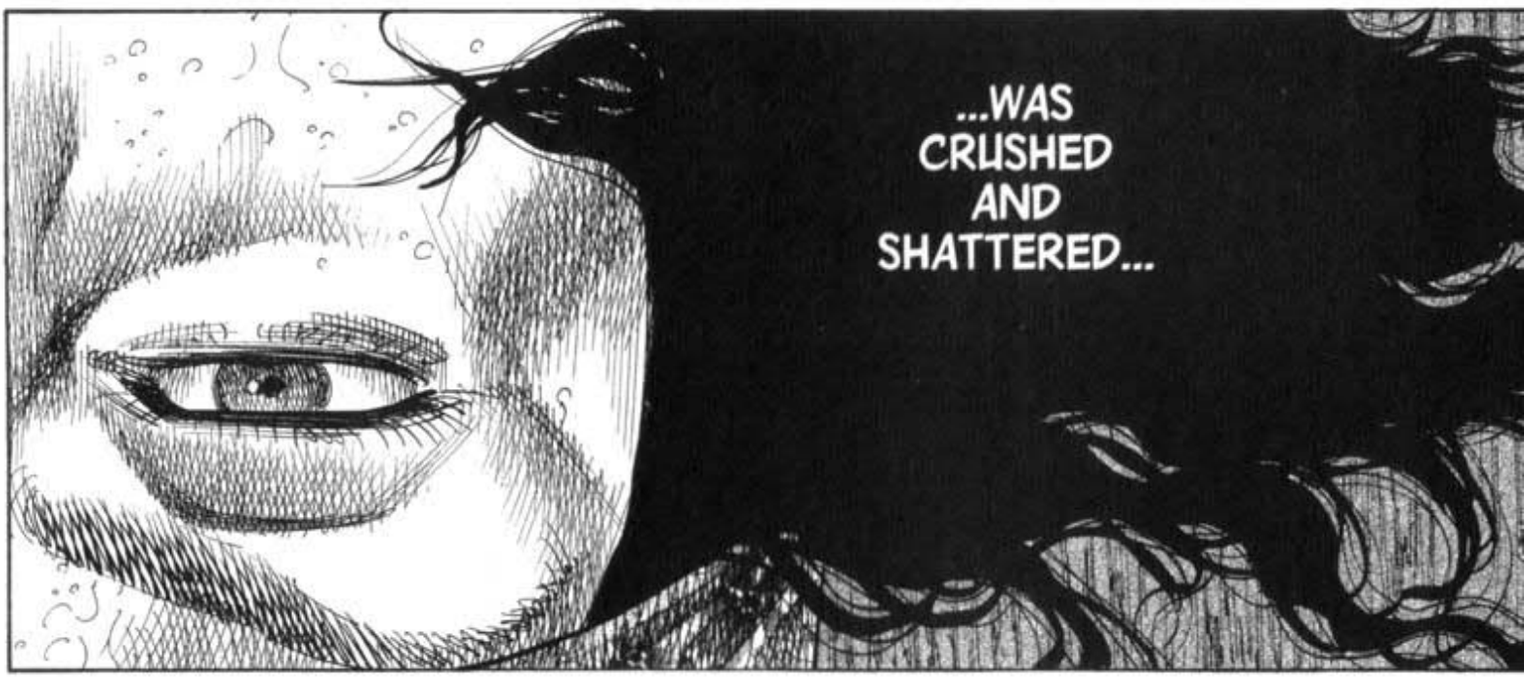
"THE GOD OF DEATH..."

IT WAS THE ONLY THING I COULD BE PROUD OF. IT KEPT ME GOING.


KAWW
KAWW
BRRR

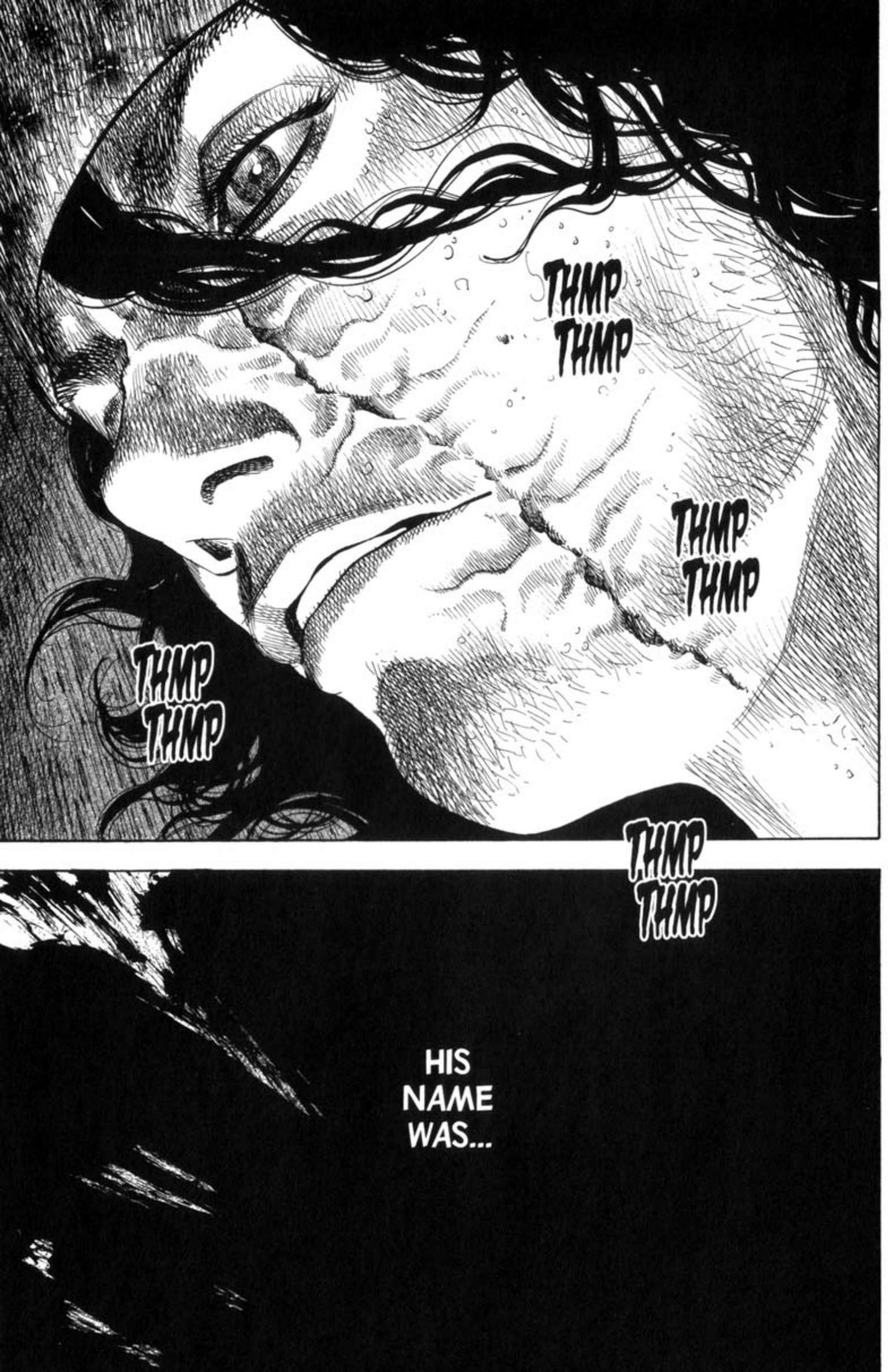
THE SPIRAL...
...OF DEATH AND KILLING...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

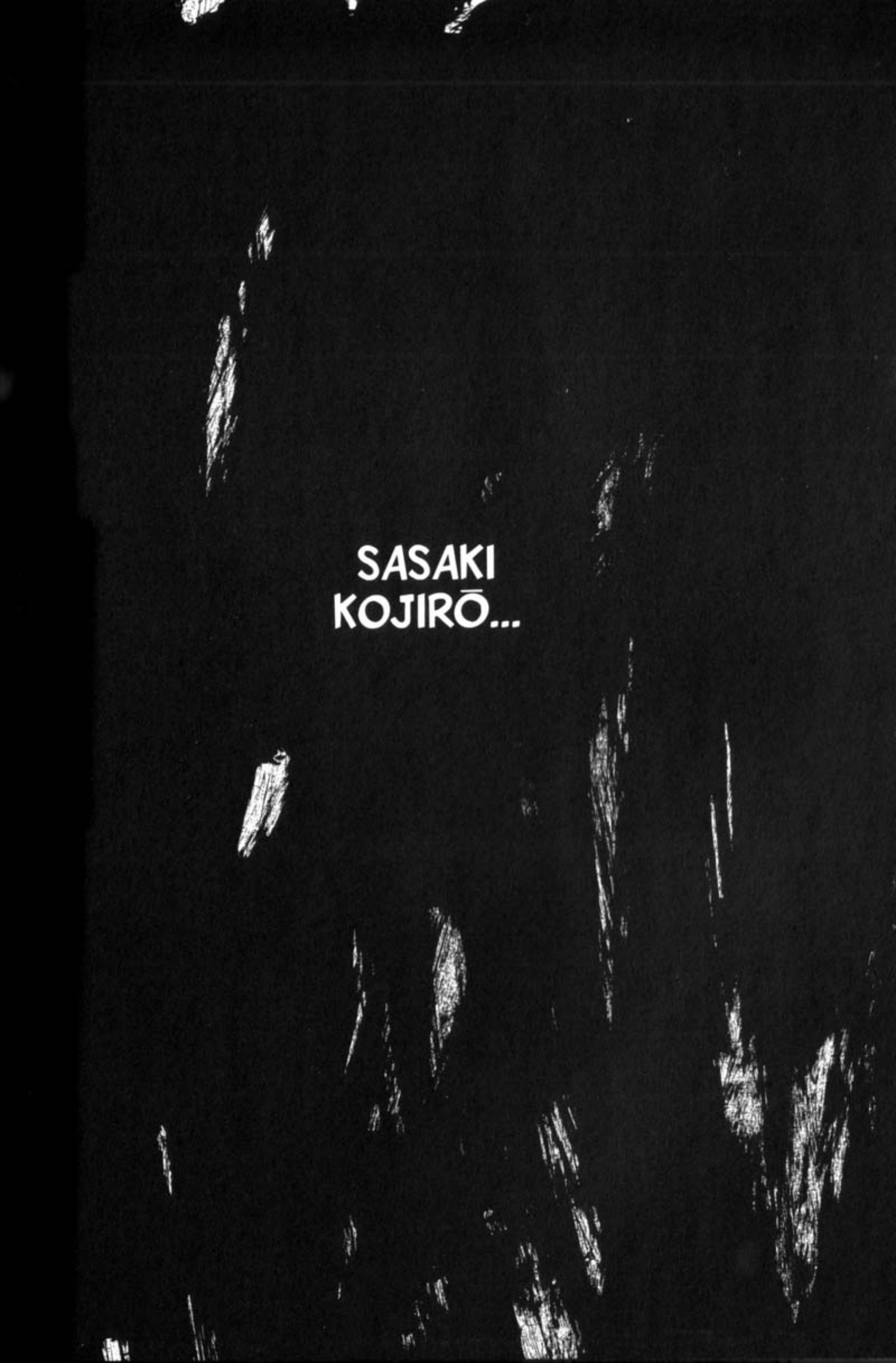

AND THAT MORSEL OF PRIDE...


...WAS CRUSHED AND SHATTERED...

THMP
THMP

...BY SOMEONE WHO WAS EVEN FURTHER ALONG THAT PATH THAN I.


THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
HIS
NAME
WAS...


SASAKI
KOJIRŌ...

Vagabond

IT'S SO COLD.
SHF
SHF
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
FSSSHHH
FSSSSHH!
WHOA...
FSSHH
IT'D BE REAL EASY TO SLIP AND FALL HERE. RIGHT, MOM?
THUMP

Special Chapter

#126 Tsujikaze Kōhei

Part One

.....
FSSSSHH

I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.

?!
FICH

FICH
TEN YEARS AGO...

I'M TENMA.

THAT'S HOW YOU GOT RID OF ME.
WHAT ?

FWP
FWP

!!

THIS IS THE TSUJIKAZE GANG.
FICH

HE'S ALIVE.
HE'S ALL RIGHT, BOSS.

KOF
KOF
KŌHEI!!

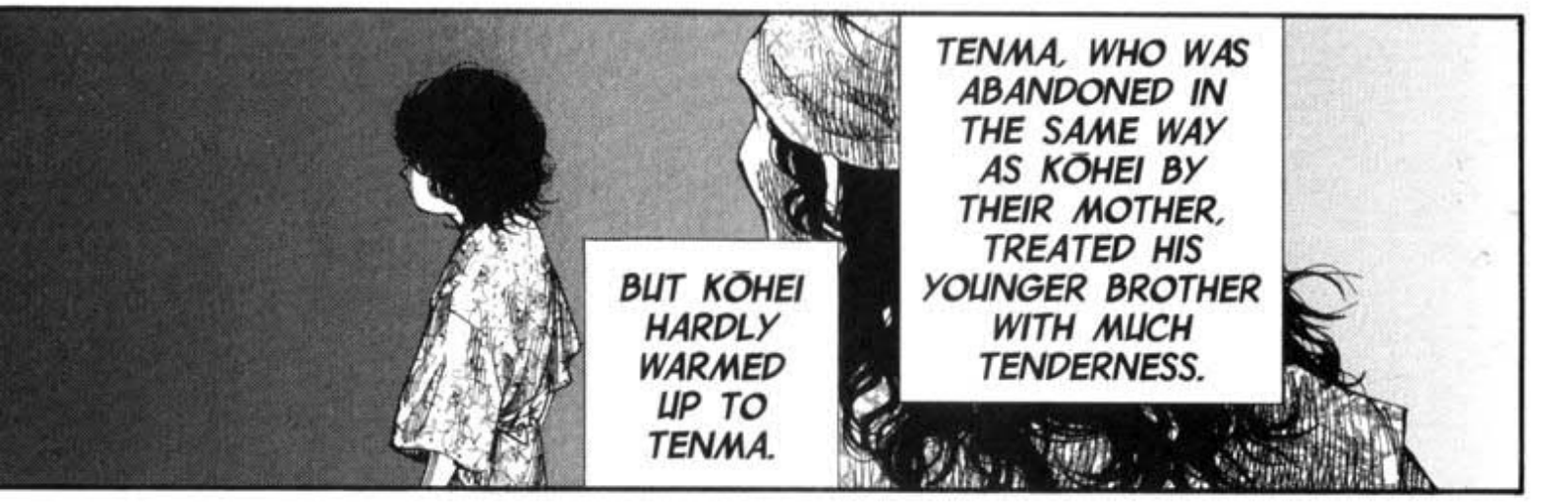
...?

...?

THE TSUJIKAZE GANG...

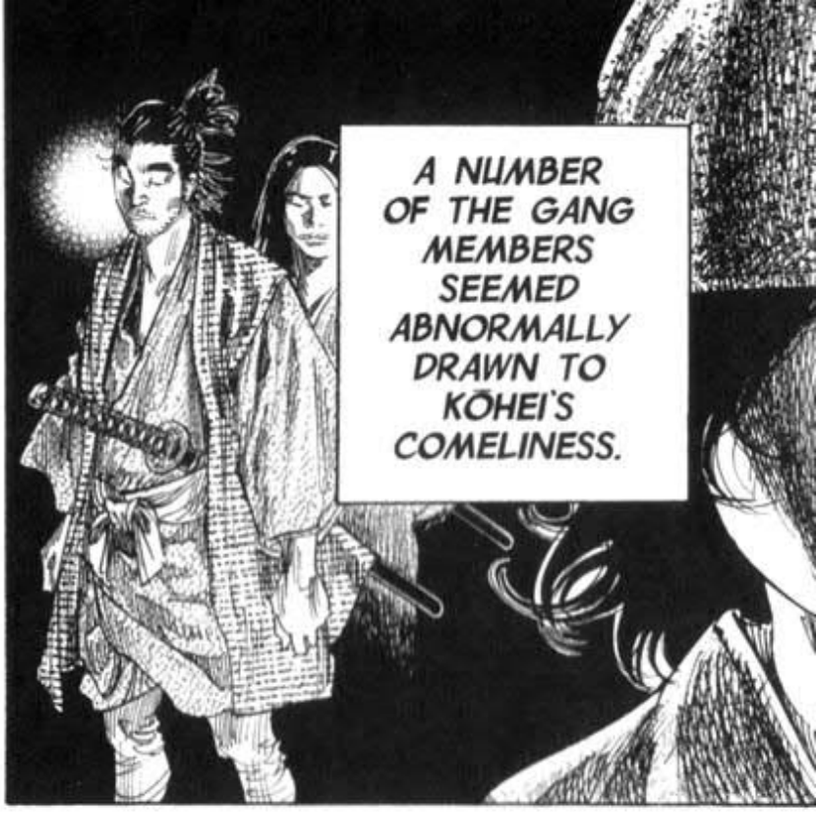
THUNK
THIS IS MY BROTHER !!
?!
HE'S ONE OF US NOW!

THIS GROUP OF YOUNG BANDITS LED BY TSUJIKAZE TENMA...
...ENGAGED IN EVERY FORM OF CRIME RANGING FROM THEFT, RAPE AND EXTORTION TO LOOTING AND PILFERING.
AT TIMES THEY EVEN RESORTED TO MURDER.
THEY WERE A WILD AND RUTHLESS BUNCH.


TENMA, WHO WAS ABANDONED IN THE SAME WAY AS KŌHEI BY THEIR MOTHER, TREATED HIS YOUNGER BROTHER WITH MUCH TENDERNESS.
BUT KŌHEI HARDLY WARMED UP TO TENMA.

BUT KŌHEI DID IMMEDIATELY TAKE TO THE THE SAVAGE WAYS OF THE GANG.
AND AT TIMES, KŌHEI'S TALENT FOR THE SWORD WOULD REVEAL ITSELF.
KŌHEI ALSO STOOD OUT IN ANOTHER WAY...

ONE EVENING....


A NUMBER OF THE GANG MEMBERS SEEMED ABNORMALLY DRAWN TO KŌHEI'S COMELINESS.

IT'S TOMEZŌ ...
BOSS!!
HEY, BOSS!!

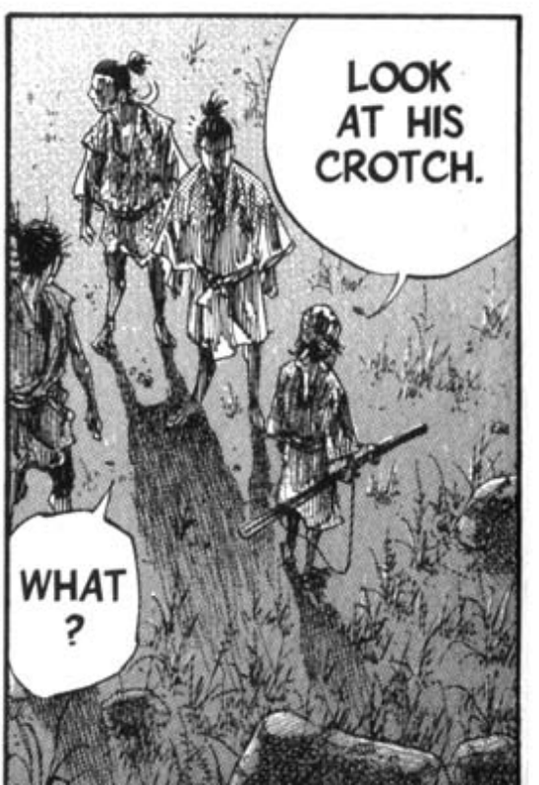
WHO THE HELL DID THIS TO TOMEZŌ?!

I DID.

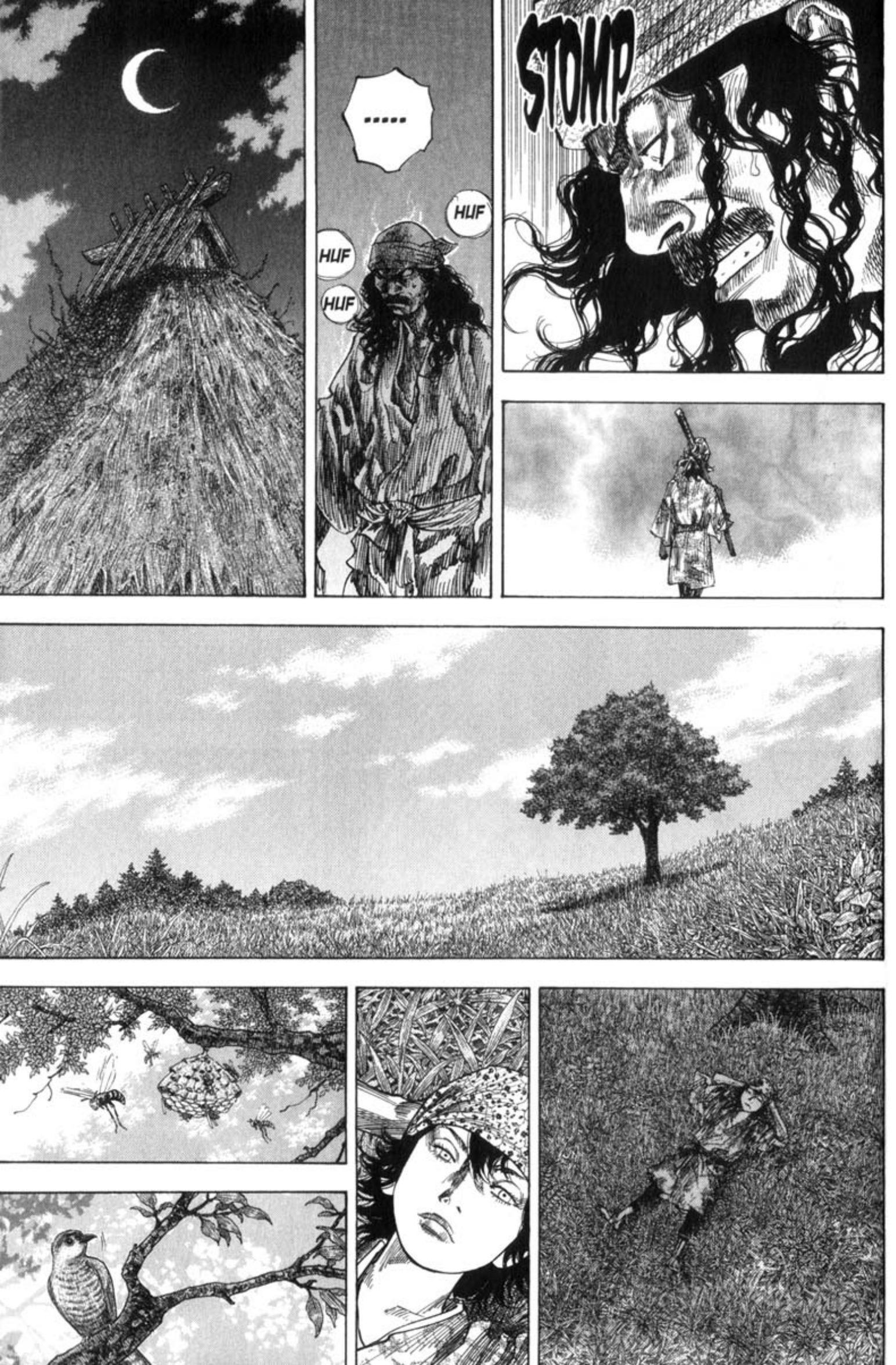
!!

KŌHEI, HOW DARE YOU KILL ONE OF US?!
YOU ?
YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET AWAY WITH THIS!!
RIGHT, BOSS?!

HEY, LOOK AT THAT!
HE DIED WITH AN EREC-TION.
DID HE HAVE A WOMAN WITH HIM?

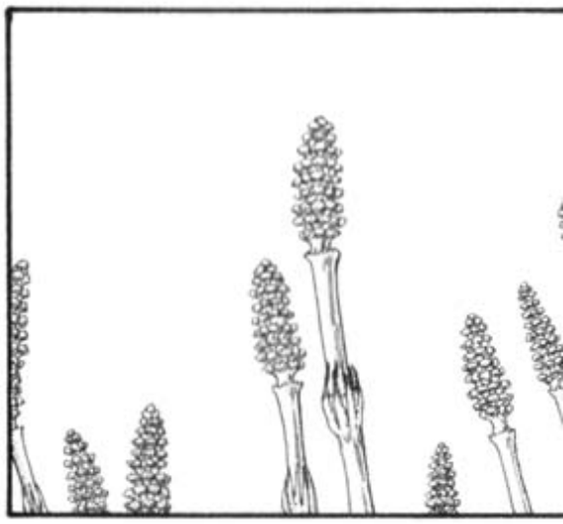

LOOK AT HIS CROTCH.
WHAT ?

HE TRIED TO PIN ME DOWN SO I CUT HIM.
DOES ANYONE HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
...!!
STOMP
!!
STOMP
?!
GASP


.....
HUF
HUF
HUF
STOMP

KŌHEI ENJOYED SPRING.

.....



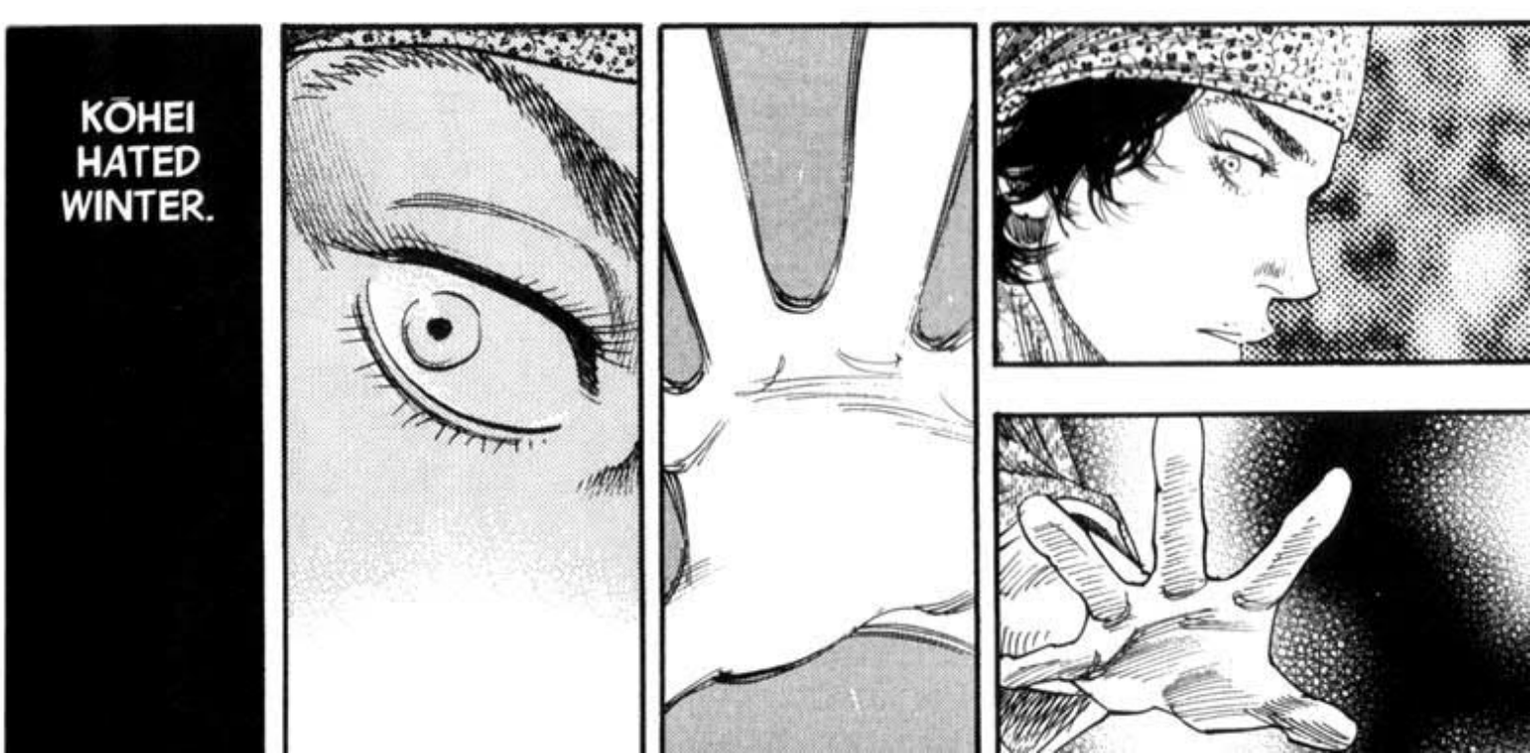
BY THE TIME THE DREADED WINTER CAME...

HE HATED WINTER.

...KŌHEI HAD TURNED TWELVE.
HE WAS NOW A FULL-FLEDGED BANDIT.
IMP
IMP
IMP
IMP
HERE THEY COME!
THE TSUJIKAZE GANG!
DAMN THEM!!
ARRGH!
IMP
IMP
IMP
AND YOU KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF YOU RESIST!
FOOD AND SAKE!!
HAND IT OVER AND NO ONE HAS TO DIE!!
IMP
IMP

DAMN!
MASTER! MASTER!
HMPH.
IMP
IMP
ARGH!
IMP
YAHH!
IMP

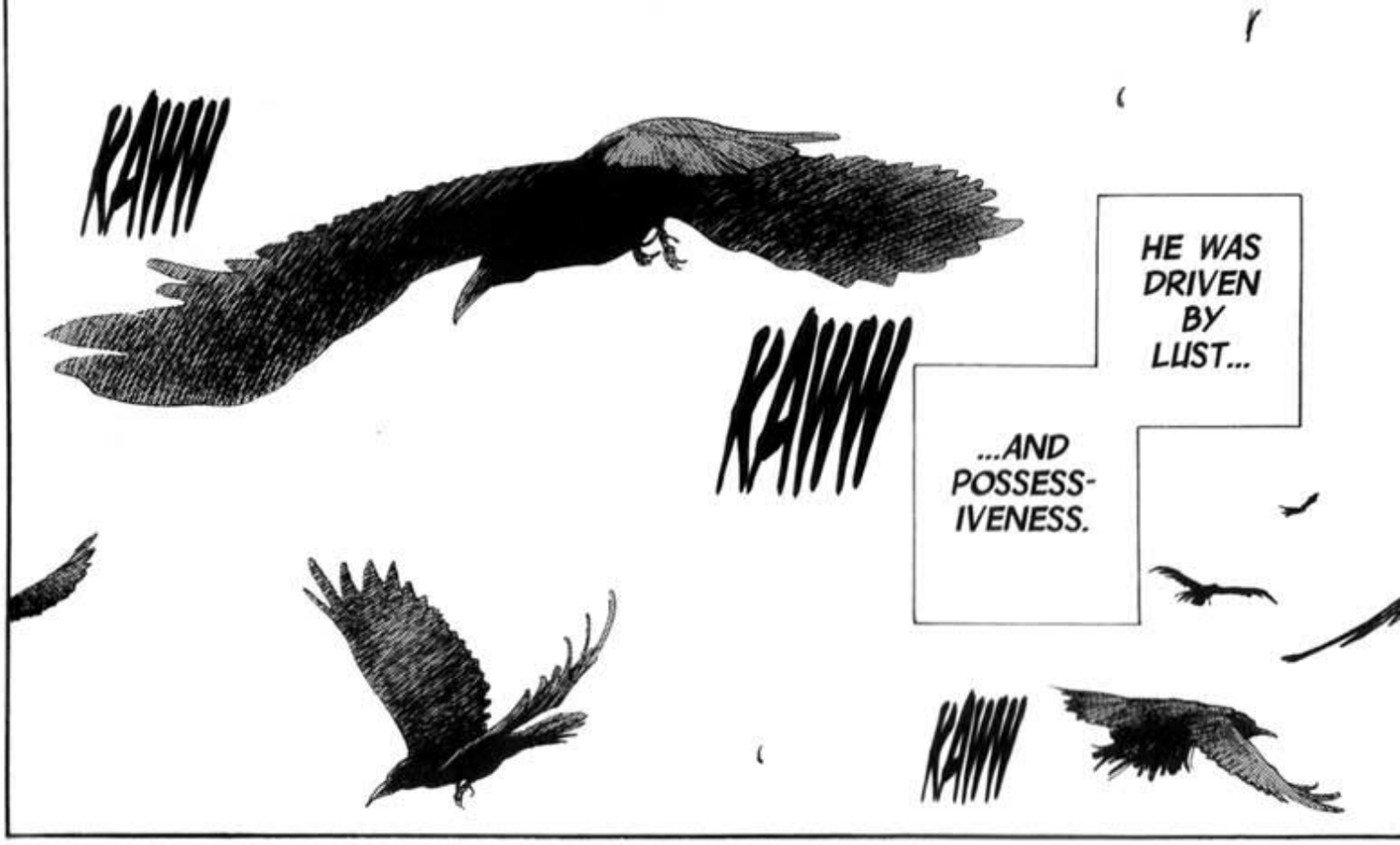
SO THIS IS THE TSUJIKAZE GANG?
SHUF
PLEASE, MASTER.


KŌHEI HATED WINTER.

SLISH
ARGH!
!
KYAA!
YOU'RE JUST A CHILD.
THUNK

WHUD
!!
GRB

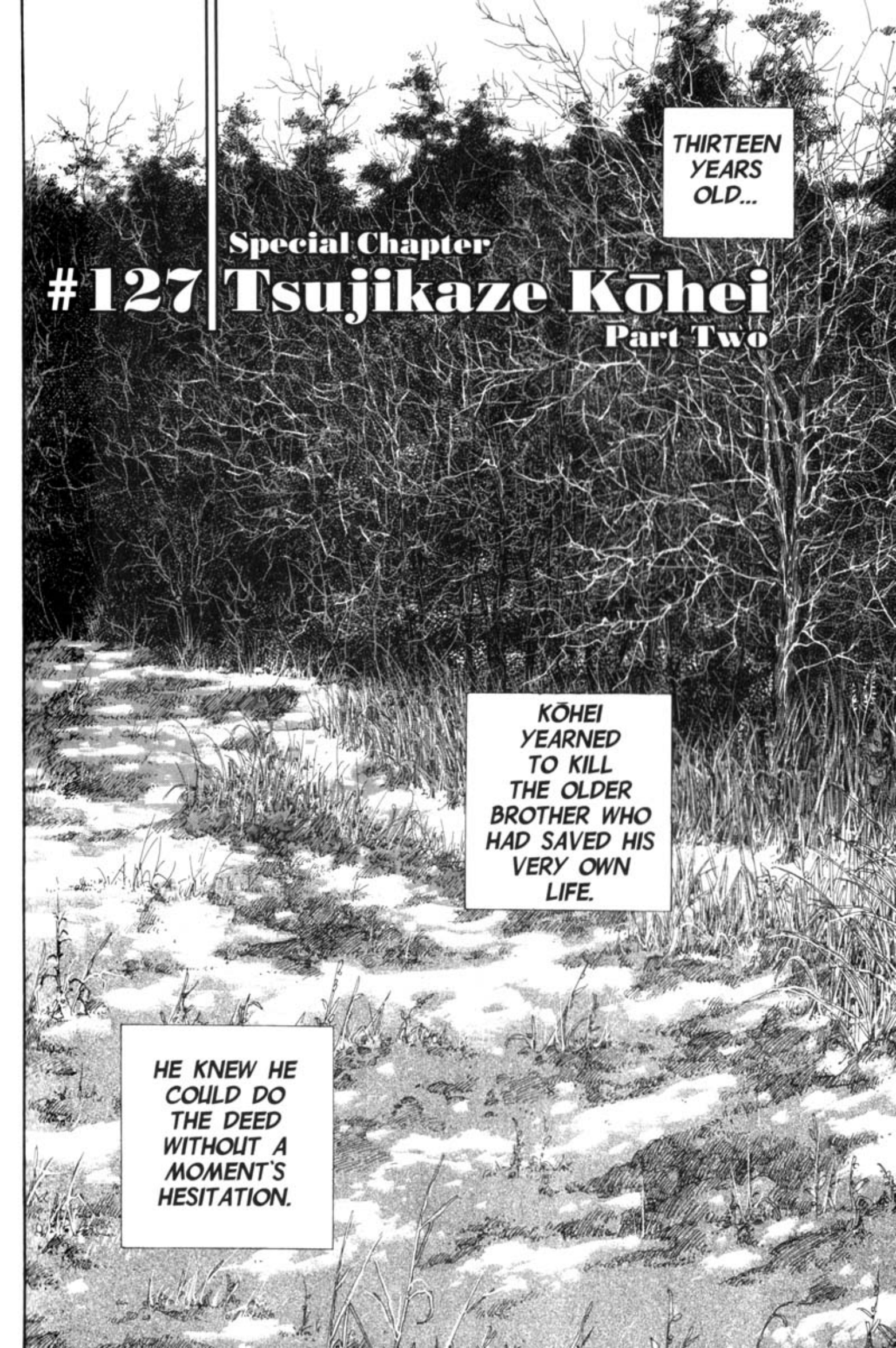
TENMA MAY HAVE SAVED HIS YOUNGER BROTHER'S LIFE...
HUF
HUF
HUF
...BUT HE HAD NOT BEEN MOTIVATED BY COMPASSION...


KAHH
KAHH
KAHH
HE WAS DRIVEN BY LUST...
...AND POSSESS-IVENESS.

WINTER...
AT TWELVE, TSUJIKAZE KŌHEI HAD FIRMLY DECIDED...
...LIFE WAS WORTHLESS.

Vagabond

ONE YEAR LATER...
KYAAA!!!
HELP!
.....
.....

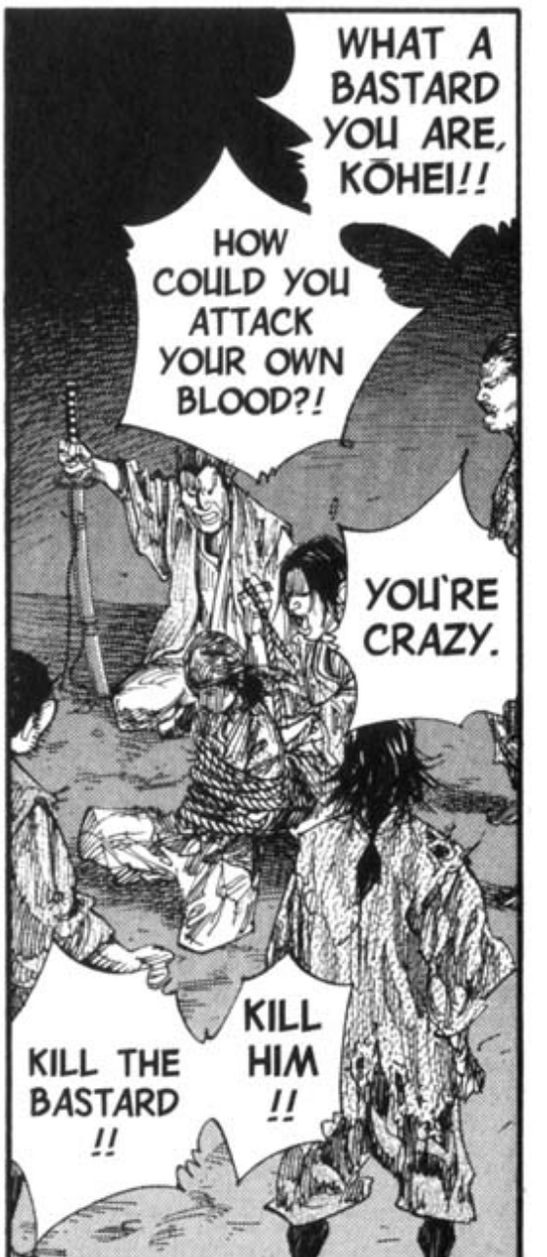

THIRTEEN YEARS OLD...
Special Chapter
#127 Tsujikaze Kōhei
Part Two
KŌHEI YEARNED TO KILL THE OLDER BROTHER WHO HAD SAVED HIS VERY OWN LIFE.
HE KNEW HE COULD DO THE DEED WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION.

KŌHEI FELT THAT HIS LIFE THAT HAD BEEN SAVED...
...HAD ABSOLUTELY NO VALUE.

HEH HEH ...
YOU'RE STILL NOT STRONG ENOUGH, KŌHEI!!

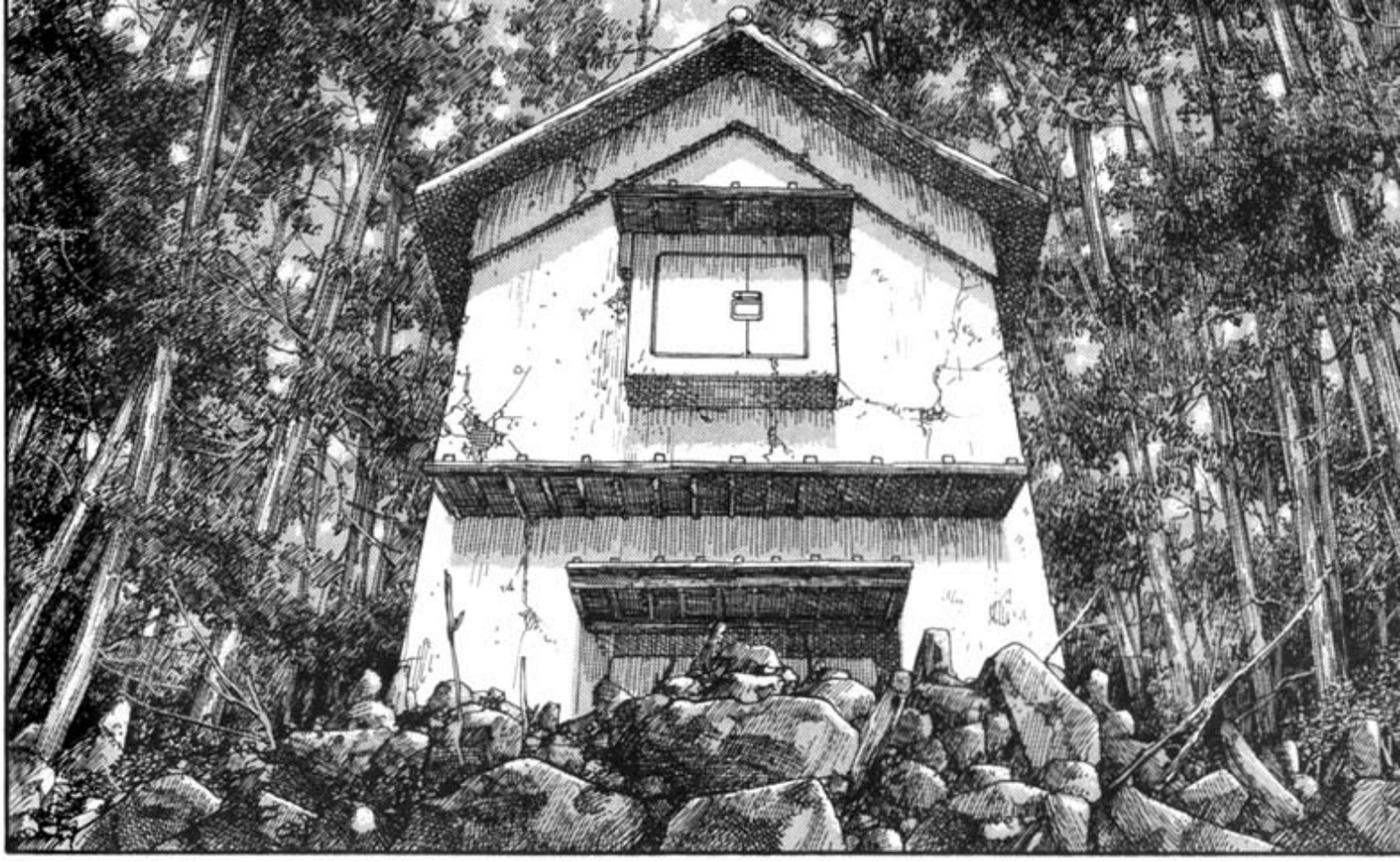
BOSS, YOUR ARM'S BLEEDING.
HM?

KILL HIM !!


WHAT A BASTARD YOU ARE, KŌHEI!!
HOW COULD YOU ATTACK YOUR OWN BLOOD?!
YOU'RE CRAZY.
KILL THE BASTARD !!
KILL HIM !!

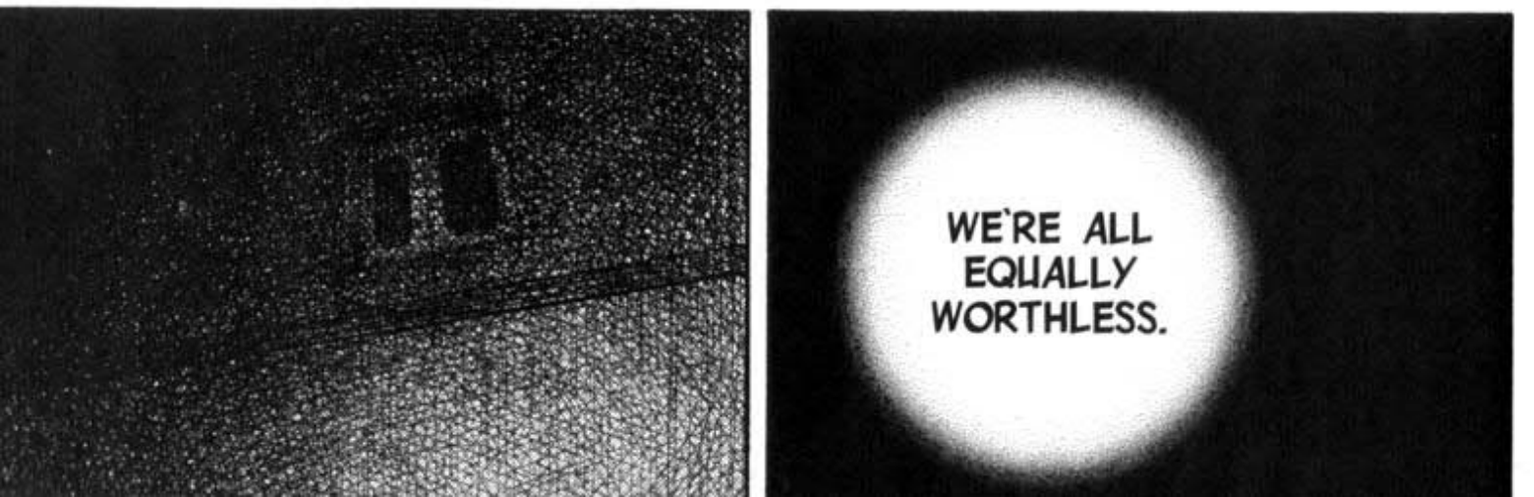
.....

KILL ME...



HAK PTUI
SMIRK
YOU'RE ONE LUCKY BASTARD!
IF YOU WEREN'T THE BOSS'S BROTHER, YOU'D HAVE BEEN KILLED.
IN ANY CASE, YOU'LL NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY AGAIN.
HERE'S YOUR MEAL.

ME...
WHY WAS I BORN?
ALL YOU BASTARDS...


WE'RE ALL EQUALLY WORTHLESS.

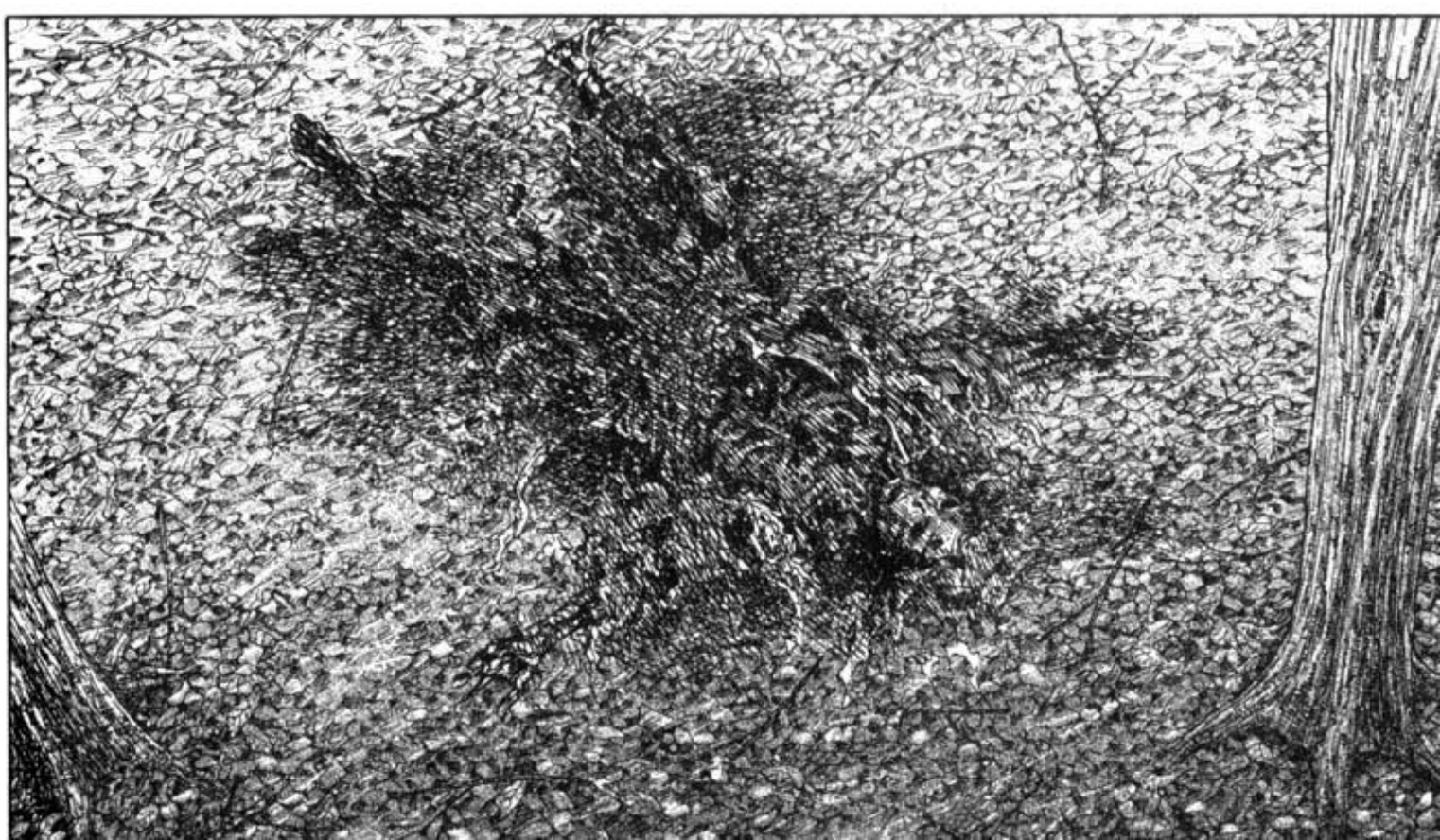
FWUMP

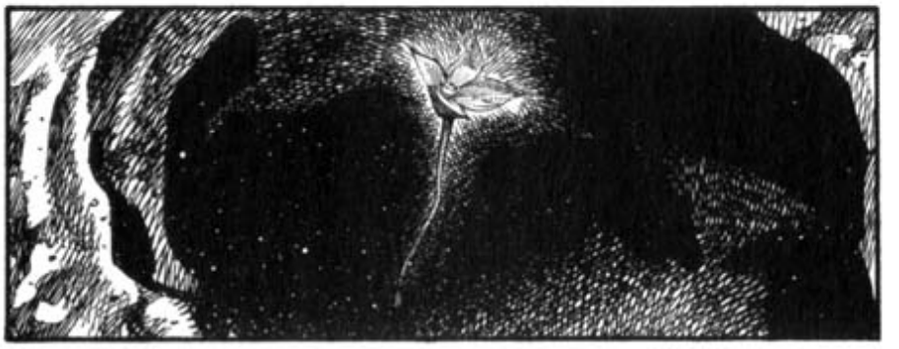
SLRP
CHMP
CHMP
CHMP
CHMP
PWK
SNIF
SNIF
CHMP
COME NOW...NO FIGHTING ...
GRR
GRR
GRMF
NNF
CHMP
GRR
CHMP
CHMP
CHMP
SLRP
SLRP

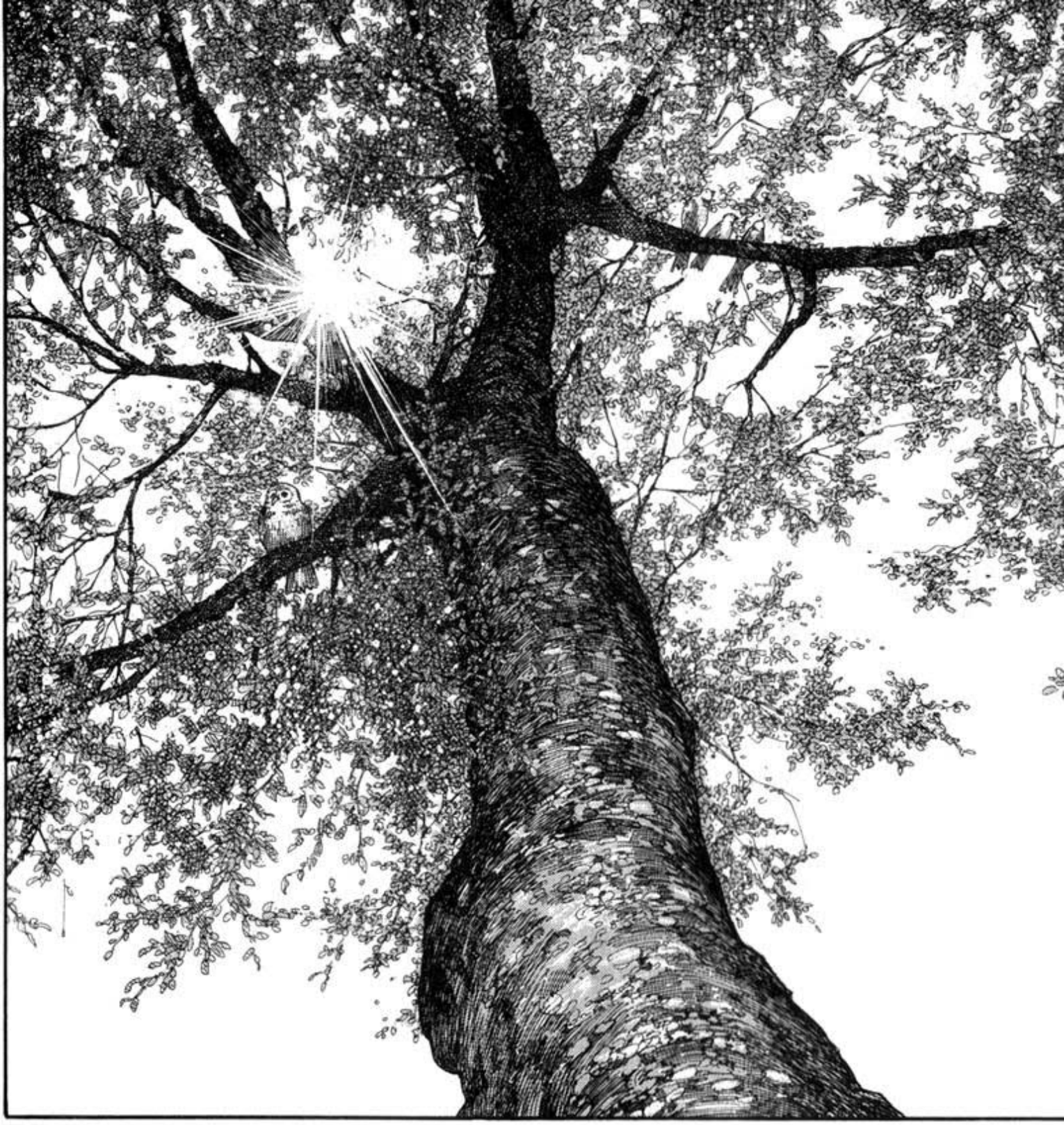
SNP
PWK
THIS IS RIGHT.
THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE.

SHLRP

FWIK





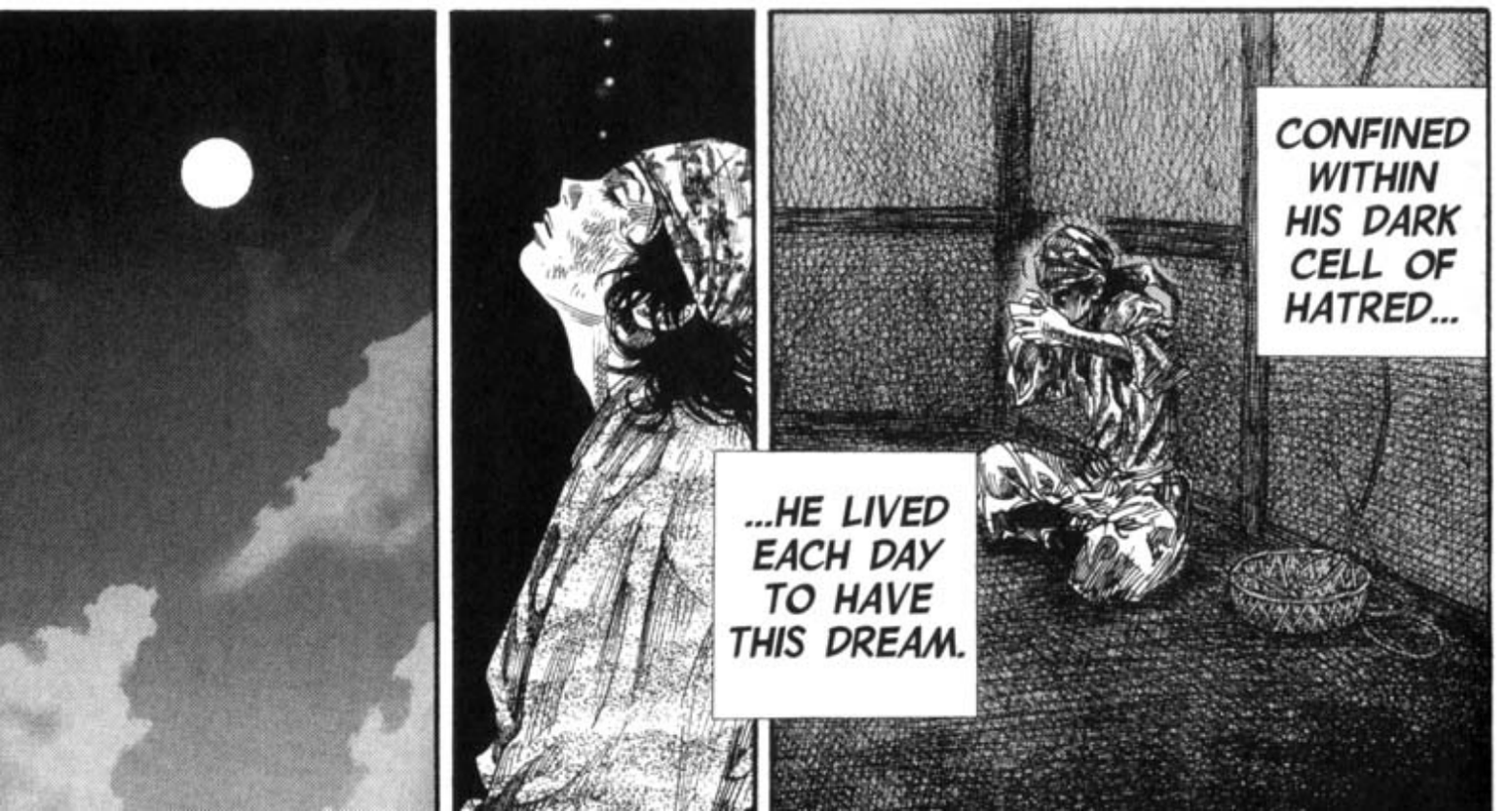


CHIRP

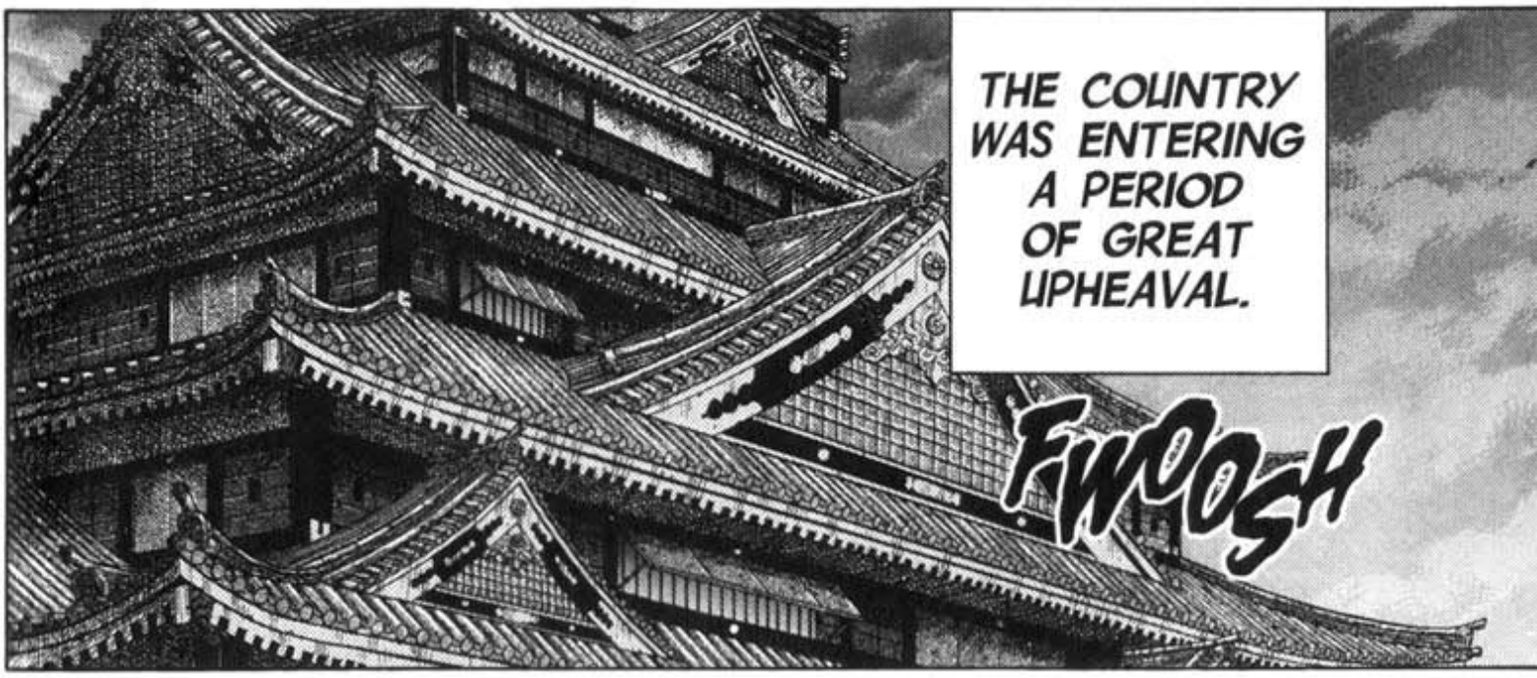
CHIRP

CHIRP

KŌHEI REPEATEDLY HAD THIS SAME DREAM.


CONFINED WITHIN HIS DARK CELL OF HATRED...
...HE LIVED EACH DAY TO HAVE THIS DREAM.

SEVEN YEARS LATER...


THE COUNTRY WAS ENTERING A PERIOD OF GREAT UPHEAVAL.
FWOOSH

AND THIS ISN'T JUST ANY BATTLE!!
THIS WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF THE COUNTRY!!
IT'S WAR!!
WE'VE BEEN WAITING ALL ALONG FOR THIS!!

WHOOSH
EVEN PENNILESS ORPHANS LIKE US WITH NO FAMILY NAMES...
EVEN *WE* MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE AT GLORY...
WE COULD MAKE NAMES FOR OURSELVES!!
YES!!
MIGHT EVEN END UP BEING HIRED BY THE TOYOTOMI CLAN.
HA HA HA HA!!
YEAH!!
THEN *WE'LL* BE THE LEADERS OF JAPAN!!
!!
JUST IMAGINE, WE'LL TAKE IEYASU'S HEAD!!

FSSSSHHHH
WE MUST ESCAPE!!
SPLSH
SPLSH
THE ENEMY'S ALMOST HERE.
WE'RE NOT SAFE HERE, EITHER!
THEY'RE GETTING AWAY.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
LOOK AT THIS.
THE TSUJIKAZE GANG IS FALLING APART...
AFTER THEM!
THAT WAY!

IT MUST CONTAIN SOMETHING IMPORTANT ...
SOMETHING REALLY PRECIOUS!
WHAT IS THIS?
AS IF THEY'VE IMPRISONED A TIGER OR A DRAGON...
WHAT ?
TREASURE ?
WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?!
SILVER OR GOLD...
OR OTHER TREASURE ...

LET'S OPEN IT UP.
THE BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA WAS SAID TO HAVE ENDED WITH IN A MATTER OF EIGHT HOURS.
UMF!
HAD THE BATTLE BEEN AN EXTENDED CAMPAIGN, THESE MEN WOULD HAVE FOUND THE BODY OF A MAN WHO HAD STARVED TO DEATH.

PHEW!
CREAK

WHAT IS IT?!
?!

!!

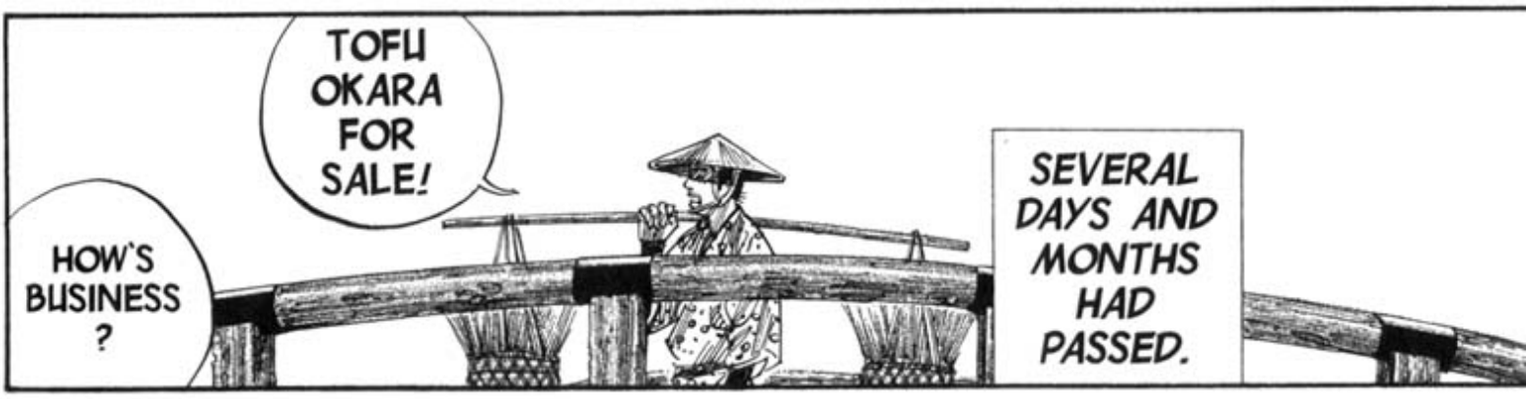
SHUF

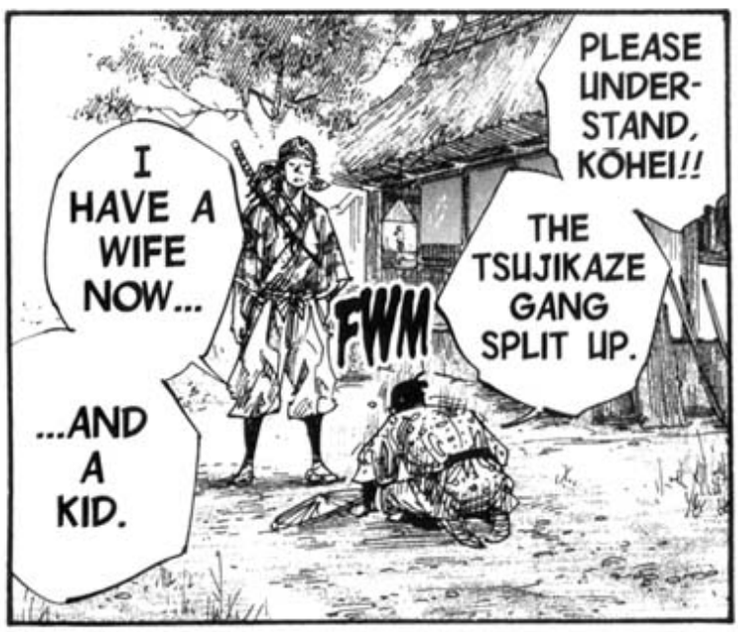
UGH!
IT REEKS.

FICH
SPLRT
!!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
K-KILL --!!
KILL HIM!!
SNIFF
HMPH!
SMELLS THE SAME OUT HERE...
THE AIR REEKS OF HATRED.
SLISH
YAHH!
TUNK
SLISH
ARGH!
NNGH!

HE LIVED ONLY TO KILL TENMA.

KŌHEI TRAINED HIS BODY IN THE DARKNESS.
FUELED BY HATRED...


TOFU OKARA FOR SALE!
HOW'S BUSINESS ?
SEVERAL DAYS AND MONTHS HAD PASSED.


I HAVE A WIFE NOW...
...AND A KID.
FWM
PLEASE UNDER-STAND, KŌHEI!!
THE TSUJIKAZE GANG SPLIT UP.

!!
KŌHEI!!

?
YOU'RE NOT WITH THE TSUJIKAZE GANG ANYMORE?

WHERE'S TENMA?
WHERE'S MY BROTHER ?

Y-YES...
BY A YOUNG GUY NAMED TAKEZŌ!!
HE WAS KILLED?!
OUR MOTHER TRIED KILLING BOTH OF US.
HE MAY BE LOCKED UP NOW, BUT AS LONG AS HE'S ALIVE THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE HE COULD HURT US.
HE TRIED TO KILL YOU, BOSS!!
YOU SHOULD KILL HIM NOW!!
BOSS!

BUT HE'S POSSESSED BY THE GOD OF DEATH.
YOU WERE WRONG, BOSS.
I MAY BE A BANDIT, BUT I CAN'T KILL MY OWN BROTHER.
HE'S COMPLETELY ALONE.
YOU MAY HAVE THOUGHT YOU SHARED A CONNECTION WITH HIM...
WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, HE'S NO DIFFERENT FROM ME!!
THE GOD OF DEATH...
TAKEZŌ...

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. Most recently for 2004, Inoue has been nominated for an Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY*, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama, *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Sasaki Kojiro
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND*, as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

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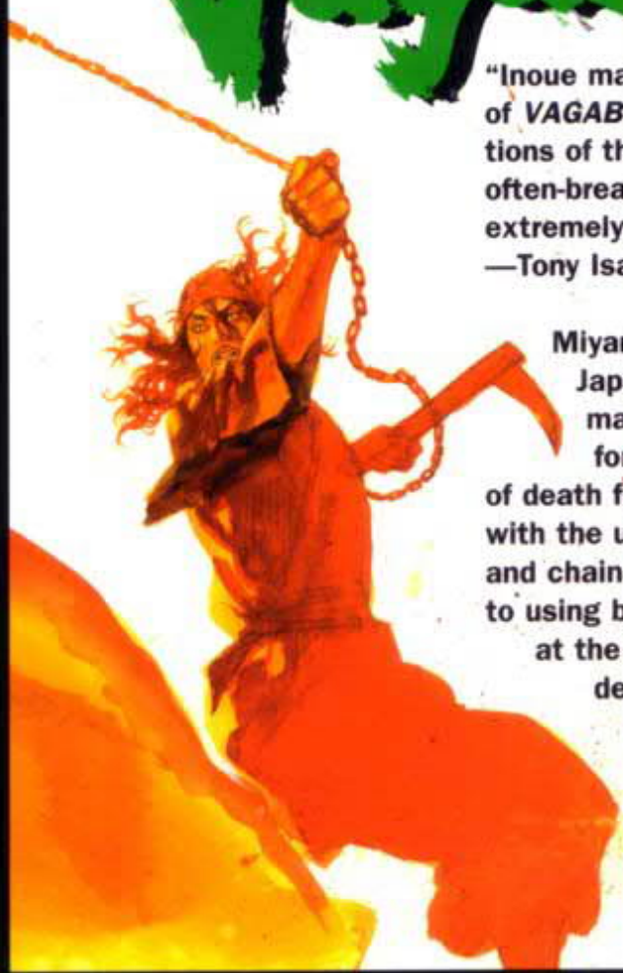

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